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D E F E N C E
O F
Natural and Revealed R E L I G I O N :

Being a COLLECTION of the
S E R M O N S
Preached at the L E C T U R E founded by the
Honourable R O B E R T B O Y L E, Esq;
(From the Year 1691 to the Year 1732.)

WITH THE
ADDITIONS and AMENDMENTS of the several A U T H O R S,
And G E N E R A L I N D E X E S.

In T H R E E V O L U M E S.

V O L. III.

Containing those P R E A C H E D by
Bp. L E N G. Dr. T. B U R N E T.
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ERRATA in Vol. III.

Page	Line	
45	56	for <i>Syrius</i> , read <i>Syrus</i> .
83	40	for <i>till</i> , r. <i>ill</i> .
92	penult.	r. <i>fruendum</i> .
198	45	for <i>Officers</i> , r. <i>Offices</i> .
203	antep.	for <i>inanimated</i> , r. <i>animated</i> .
204	ult.	for <i>ἐλλυκας</i> , r. <i>ἐλλήλας</i> .
209	antep.	for <i>iv</i> , r. <i>ix</i> .
210	antep.	for <i>in</i> , r. <i>ut</i> .
226	antep.	for <i>Schimes</i> , r. <i>Schismes</i> .
227	20	for <i>personally</i> , r. <i>professedly</i> .
242	48	r. <i>θεωρήσειν</i> .
—	58	for <i>pro</i> , r. <i>propria</i> .

Page	Line	
243	57	for <i>convientiam</i> , read <i>convenientiam</i> .
302	43	r. <i>Spinofists</i> .
393	16	r. <i>Nazarenes</i> .
396	18	r. <i>Cerinthians</i> .
397	penult.	r. <i>Λεκαῖν</i> .
440	35	for <i>and</i> , r. <i>of</i> .
469	32	after <i>compass</i> insert <i>it</i> .
701	18	for <i>Place</i> , r. <i>Peace</i> .
732	18	after <i>Proof</i> insert <i>of</i> .
748	42	instead of <i>for</i> , r. <i>from</i> .
772	ult.	for <i>ὑπερ</i> , r. <i>ὑπερ</i> .



*Natural Obligations to believe the Principles
of Religion and Divine Revelation.*

IN SIXTEEN
SERMONS,

Preached in the CHURCH of
Saint Mary le Bow, London;

In the Years 1717 and 1718.

AT THE
LECTURE

Founded by the HONOURABLE
ROBERT BOTLE, Esq.

By the RIGHT REVEREND
Dr. *JOHN LENG*, late Lord Bishop of *Norwich*.

TO
The RIGHT HONOURABLE
RICHARD, *Earl of BURLINGTON*;

The Right Reverend Fathers in GOD
CHARLES, *Lord Bishop of NORWICH*,
EDMUND, *Lord Bishop of LINCOLN*,
SAMUEL, *Lord Bishop of CARLISLE*,
AND
WHITE, *Lord Bishop of PETERBOROUGH*;

T R U S T E E S

Appointed by
The Most Reverend Father in God, *THOMAS*, late
Lord Archbishop of *Canterbury*; the last surviving
TRUSTEE Named by

THE HONOURABLE
ROBERT BOYLE, Esq.

THESE
S E R M O N S

Are most humbly Dedicated.

S E R M O N I.

Natural Obligations to believe the Principles of Religion
and Divine Revelation.

Preached, *January* the 7th, 1716-17.

H E B. iii. 12.

Take heed, Brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil Heart of Unbelief, in departing from the Living God.

TH E S E Words of the Apostle are spoken to such as were at that Time *Leng.* supposed to be Believers of the Christian Doctrine, at least in such a *S E R M.* Degree as, in some measure, to acknowledge it to be from God, and *I.* to be well persuaded of the Truth of its first Principles; though some of them perhaps not sufficiently instructed, as yet, in all the Consequences of those Principles, or in all the several Branches of Christian Faith and Practice: And they contain a general Exhortation to beware of falling back into a State of Infidelity, or of disbelieving and renouncing that Gospel Doctrine which they had once entertained, and upon which, as a Foundation, he intended to build those farther Doctrines which, were necessary to render the Christian Institution complete.

T H E Expressions here made use of, are such as plainly imply the several following Particulars.

First, That Infidelity of the Christian Doctrine, when plainly proposed to us, is in a great measure voluntary, and therefore chargeable to Men's own Account: for else it would be unreasonable to give such a Caution to beware of it.

Secondly, That it proceeds from a vicious Disposition of Mind and Affections: it has not its Original in the Head or Understanding, but in the Heart, being called *an evil Heart of Unbelief.*

Thirdly, That it is a revolting from that natural Duty which we owe to God, the Author of our Life and Being; a *departing from the Living God*; and therefore,

Fourthly, That Men, by falling into such Infidelity, may be highly culpable before God, and, as such, may be justly punishable by him for the perverse Use of those Faculties, and Means of employing them, which he has bestowed upon them.

I need not add, that the Caution itself supposes, that Men who have once been Believers, may for want of Care and Attention, and of living according to their Belief, relapse into a State of Infidelity, either partial or total; they may be *so hardened by the Deceitfulness of Sin*, as by degrees to set themselves against that Truth which they have formerly admitted: And therefore, if I were now to speak only to those who do at present believe the Gospel, and own their Belief of it; and who do, upon that account, take these Words of the Apostle to be the Direction

Leng. rection or Caution of God Almighty by his inspired Minister, I might speak very
 SERM. usefully to the forementioned Particulars, as a Warning to all Christians to *bold*
 I. *fast the Profession of their Faith*, and shew how much we are all concerned in this
 Apostolical Advice; lest by neglecting to make a proper Use of that Doctrine,
 which God hath revealed to us for the Direction of our Lives, and by suffering
 our Lusts and Passions to prevail over our Reason and Consideration, we should
 first put away a good Conscience, and by that means be tempted, or wrought upon
 to make Shipwreck of our Faith.

BUT since I am now supposed to direct my Discourse to such as pretend not
 yet to be persuaded of the Truth or Importance of the Christian Religion, and to
 such as are diffident of the Principles of all Religion, or at least are willing to
 dispute themselves into a Disbelief of it, or such great Uncertainty about it, as
 makes them utterly unconcerned whether it be true or false; I must not to such
 Men use these Words of the Text in an Authoritative Manner, nor urge them any
 farther than as a piece of prudent Advice, which is not allowed by them to have
 any more Weight in it, than what may be made plain and evident from the
 Reason and Nature of the Thing.

AND upon this Foundation I shall at this Time apply myself to such as deny,
 or dispute against the common Principles of Religion, and think it a very inno-
 cent and indifferent Matter, either to believe them, or not believe them, as it shall
 happen, as having respect only to their present Convenience, and not concerned
 about any future Consequences; and shall endeavour to persuade them from com-
 mon Reason, that it is their Duty not to be unconcerned in the Case, but to give
 the Arguments that have been, or may be offered in behalf of the Principles of
 Religion, a fair, and serious, and impartial Hearing and Examination. And in
 order to this, I desire that they would, without Prejudice, consider the following
 Particulars.

I. THAT there may be other probable Causes of Infidelity often assigned, be-
 sides Want of Evidence, even when this is pretended as an Excuse for it.

II. THAT the Principles of Religion are of that high Nature, and universal
 Concernment to Mankind, that we cannot answer it to our own Reason to be un-
 concerned about them; and therefore that we must, as rational Creatures, endea-
 vour to be satisfied about them.

III. THAT if we have sufficient Reason to believe the great Principles of Re-
 ligion; such as the Being of a God, and a Providence, and a Future State, &c.
 our Unbelief will not excuse us from a Crime in the Sight of God.

IV. THAT it is unreasonable for any Man to endeavour to persuade others out
 of the Principles of Religion, 'till he himself is first evidently convinced that they
 are false, and disadvantageous to Mankind.

V. THAT it is still more unreasonable to make them the Subject of Raillery
 and Ridicule.

I. THAT there may be other probable Causes of Infidelity often assigned, be-
 sides Want of Evidence, even when this is pretended as an Excuse for it.

THOUGH such as do not believe, are very ready to charge all Believers with
 unreasonable Credulity, and to excuse their own Unbelief with this Pretence, that
 they have not sufficient Evidence to convince them; yet this may be nothing else
 but a general Desire which all Men have to justify their own Conduct, and remove
 the Blame from themselves. They declare indeed, that they are ready to think
 freely upon all Subjects, and willing, as they say, to submit to Reason; but then
 the Reason ought, in their Opinion, to be such as to command their Assent, so
 plain and clear that it cannot be denied: But that the Principles of Religion carry
 no such forcible Evidence with them; for if they did, who could deny his Assent
 to them? and if they do not, what Harm can there be in refusing it? This is their
 Way of arguing. And indeed if there were no voluntary Indisposition in any Man,
 which

which could hinder him from discerning a plain Reason when proposed to him; *Leng.* there would be some Force in the Argument. But if there may be corrupt Inclinations, Passions, or Prejudices, which blind Mens Understanding, and keep them from assenting to some Truths, which appear plain and evident to those who are free and unprejudiced, then their Argument has no Force; and we cannot judge of the Strength or Weakness of that Evidence which is offered for any Truth, merely from the Effect which it has upon those, to whom it is offered. *SERM. I.*

THEY that disbelieve the great Truths of Religion, must needs own, that those who do believe them, believe upon insufficient Arguments, or else they would be self-condemned for not believing; and therefore they must also own, that as much of the Belief as has no competent Argument to support it, must be founded upon some wrong Disposition of the Person believing; that is, he has some Prejudice, Passion, or Affection, which inclines him to believe that Argument good, which in itself is not so, even though he himself is not, for the time, aware of any such undue Prejudice. Now certainly if Credulity may arise from such a Bias, Incredulity may also proceed from another: For we see plainly in other Cases, that the very same Arguments proposed in the same Light to different Men, even of the same natural Abilities, shall have very different Effects; and that which entirely convinces one, shall not in the least move another, though supposed to be of equal Understanding. And yet both Sides are unwilling to own any Defect or Prejudice in themselves, and chuse rather to blame the Argument itself, or the Understandings of other People, who apprehend the Argument differently from what themselves do.

AND as it is in other Cases, so it is in Religion; the Arguments for the Truth of it may be very good and conclusive, but some Men may be indisposed for the receiving of them: As, for instance,

1. Some Men are so far immersed in the Things of this Life, in the Pursuits of Riches or Pleasures, or the like, that they will not be at the Pains to consider whether there be any Force in such Arguments as relate to the Being of a God and a future State, or no; and so content themselves with being ignorant or indifferent about them. Others, by indulging their Lusts and Passions, contract a Stupidity towards Things of an higher Nature; or by too easily entertaining such Prejudices as favour their corrupt Inclinations, Appetites, or Humours, grow unwilling to admit of any thing that contradicts them: They would be glad to have Things so as best suits their own present vicious Desires, and therefore they are not sincere in their Love of Truth, but are desirous that Truth should be just what they love, and therefore they readily embrace any Argument or Objection which they think makes for them. *They like not to retain God in their Knowledge*, because their Practice is disagreeable to his Nature. Every vicious Inclination which a Man is resolved to pursue, is a strong Bias upon his Mind, either towards Infidelity, or at least towards such corrupt Notions of the Nature of God, as insensibly lead Men to it.

WE have a very plain Instance of this in that old *Epicurean* Notion of a God, as of a Being *happy* indeed and eternal, but whose Happiness consisted altogether in doing nothing, and being concerned for nothing. For they who placed the most of human Happiness in Ease and Indolence, and the Pleasure of Self-gratification, were easily drawn to believe the same of the Divine Happiness; and from thence to conclude, that there could not be any Providence of God, which concerned itself with the Affairs of the World: for all such Concern would destroy its own Ease and Rest, and consequently its Happiness. For it was a Maxim with them, *Nisi quietum nihil beatum*; and again, as *Velleius* in *Tully* expresses their common Sentiment, which, it is plain, had its Original from their own Love of Ease and Laziness of Temper, *Nos autem beatam vitam in animi securitate, & in omnium vacatione munerum ponimus.*

2. As for those who are not so much under the Power of their bodily Appetites or Passions, but that they can see the gross Deformity of them, and how much they debase human Nature when Men are led by them, and are therefore ashamed of such a brutal Life as visibly sinks them below the Use of human Reason; yet

Leng. even these Men may have inward Vices of the Mind, which, without a sincere
 S E R M. and honest Attention to the secret Workings of their own Hearts, may produce
 I. as perverse Effects in their Reasonings, and more incurable. For Infidelity may
 often arise from Pride and Self-conceit, which disposes Men of Parts and Learning
 to an Affectation of Singularity, and a Desire of seeming wiser than other People,
 by maintaining Paradoxes, and contradicting all Opinions that are vulgarly re-
 ceived, for that very Reason because they are so: And they that are of a lighter
 and vainer Temper, and value themselves upon an Appearance of Wit in Conversa-
 tion, proceed sometimes to ridicule and laugh at Things of the highest Nature, in-
 stead of arguing soberly about them. That Mens indulging this kind of Temper
 in themselves, has been a Temptation to them to embrace atheistical Opinions in
 other polite Ages and Countries besides our own, is plain from what *Plato* ob-
 served long ago, who when, in one of his Dialogues, he brings in *Clinias* disput-
 ing against Atheism from the common Topics of the Beauty and Harmony of the
 Universe, the regular Motions of the Heavenly Bodies, and the common Notions
 of Mankind, in which all Nations, *Greeks* and *Barbarians*, agreed concerning a
 God and a Providence, makes an *Athenian* Stranger reply to him, That he was
 afraid there were a Set of ill Men in the World, who would despise and laugh at
 such old and common Arguments. It may be, says he, that you who live here, re-
 mote from the City, may imagine that Intemperance in Pleasure and sensual Lust
 is the only Cause of such Impiety; but there is another Ground of it besides this,
 and that^b is a certain grievous Ignorance pretending to the greatest Wisdom. *Plato*
 knew that at *Athens*, the Seat of Wit and Learning, there were some great Pretend-
 ers to Philosophy, who maintained atheistical Opinions upon a formed *Hypothesis*
 contrary to the ancient Doctrine; and some, no doubt, set themselves up for Wits
 upon that account, not that they really had any Superiority of Understanding above
 those that went before, but because they affected something that might distinguish
 them from the rest of the World, if it was only in point of Novelty. We see
 that in other Cases besides Religion, this Temper often leads Men to a Spirit of
 Contradiction, in the gratifying of which, Men may fall into very foul Mistakes
 and Absurdities themselves, while they imagine themselves to be only exposing and
 ridiculing the Follies and Absurdities of other People. And that the same Temper
 may mislead Men in respect of the Principles of Religion, is more than probable
 from the Manner of Writing which those Men generally pursue, who appear for-
 wardest in the Cause of Infidelity. There does not often seem to be in them so
 great a Concern for Truth, as a Desire of shewing their own Parts; nor are they
 ever so forward in laying down any consistent Scheme of Principles of their own,
 as in contradicting the most commonly received Principles of others. They seem
 desirous of being taken for Men of deeper Reach than their Neighbours, that are
 not to be imposed upon by vulgar Opinions, but can spy the Weakness or Failure
 of those Arguments which to others, that are more modest, have always appeared
 very convincing. A certain Self-confidence, mixed with a Contempt of other
 Mens Understanding, is very apt to betray Men into a wrong Use of their Rea-
 son, and to make them strike into odd and singular Ways of thinking, only be-
 cause they are new, and contrary to that which others have chosen upon much
 better Consideration: and we see that there is nothing so absurd, but what if once
 started, will find some Profelytes for a while, if it be only for the Novelty of it.

It has been thought by some, That the chief Reason why all Men assent to
 the Truth of Mathematical Demonstrations, when plainly proposed to them, is
 because none of those Truths interfere with the Interests, Passions, or Inclinations
 of any Man; because if they did, Men concerned would find some Pretence to
 evade the Force of them. I will not affirm that this is the only Reason of such
 universal Assent to Geometrical Conclusions; but the Supposal, however, evidently
 allows, that some Truths, which in their own Nature are capable of sufficient
 Proof, may be disbelieved or rejected through Prejudice, or Prepossession of Inter-
 est or Passion, or some partial or vicious Disposition of Mind in those, to whom

^a Lib. 10. de Legibus, p. 886.

^b Ἀμάρτια μάλιστ' ἀλλοτρίαν ἐξουσίαν ἢ μεγαλήν φρόνησιν. De Legg. lib. 10. p. 888. Ed. Serrani.

the Proof is offered. It is certain, that what Men do not like, they are very un-^{Leng.} willing to understand, though they will not easily be brought to own this for the ^{S E R M.} Reason, but will always find out some Colour or other to avoid the Suspicion of ^{I.} such Partiality.

But besides these personal Indispositions of Mind, which may give a strong Bias towards Infidelity, there is one Thing farther which appears to have great Influence over some Mens Reasoning, even in the first Principles of Religion; and that is

3. AN inconsiderate and indistinguishing Aversion to Superstition, which Evil they think can never be effectually cured, but by destroying the very Foundation of Religion itself. It is a very common Practice, in many Instances, for those that are grown weary of the Folly and Mischief of one Extreme, presently and without Consideration to betake themselves to the opposite, as if that were the only Remedy, which yet in the End proves as bad or worse perhaps than the Disease itself.

It is evident, from those high Encomiums, that the Disciples and Followers of *Epicurus* give their Master, for his forming an *Hypothesis* which would free them from Superstition, that they were greatly biassed by this Principle, or else they could not so easily have fallen in with so absurd an *Hypothesis*, who were many of them otherwise Men of better Parts and more Learning than *Epicurus* himself appears to have been. But the World being then greatly over-run with Superstition, which often passed in common under the Name of Religion, they would not be at the Pains to examine thoroughly the Merits of each, and make a just Distinction. A Man can hardly forbear thinking that those, who make such horrible Outcries of the heavy Yoke of Superstition, even while they seem to include all Reverence for a Deity under that Name, had been some Time or other of their Lives greatly under the Power of this Evil, or that they had formerly been taught to worship some cruel Demon, which had left such dreadful Impressions upon their Imaginations, as to make them afraid of the Thoughts of any invisible Being; and desirous to be persuaded, upon any Terms, that there is no such Thing: at least one cannot easily imagine, that those Men ever had any just or true Notion of a God, the most excellent and lovely of all Beings, who can so easily confound Religion and Superstition, as to think, that one of them cannot be admitted or discarded without the other. To be under the Power of Superstition is, no doubt, a very wretched State, and exposes Men both to much Wickedness and Misery, if the Mind be infected with it to any great degree: but it has its Original not from Religion or a true Sense of God, but from a false and perverse Opinion of the Deity, or from taking something else for God which is not so. But it is a very uncomfortable Cure for this Evil to endeavour to banish the Belief of the true God out of our Minds. This Way, in the Opinion of *Plutarch* (in his Treatise of *Superstition*) is like unwarily avoiding Robbers, or wild Beasts, or Fire, by running without Consideration into a By-way full of Gulfs and Precipices. And yet he tells us, that there were such Men as took this extravagant Course, and to avoid Superstition fell into obstinate Atheism, wholly passing over Religion which lies in the middle between these Extremes. And I am afraid there are still such as split upon the same Rock upon the same Occasion^d. But I cannot say, that this Pretence can justly have the same Force with it, or plead the same Excuse now, that it might do under Heathen Superstition. For when there was very little true Knowledge of God among them, and much

^c Φόβον δὲ ἐν αὐτῇ (δεισιδαιμονίᾳ) ἀσφαλῶς τε καὶ συμφερόντως, ἐκ ὧν οἱ ληστῶν ἢ θηρίων ἔφοδον ἢ πῦρ ἀπει-
κίτως καὶ ἀλογίᾳς ἀεὶ φέροντες, ἐμπέτουν εἰς ἀνομίαν βάρβαρον καὶ κτηνὴν ἔχουσαν· ἕτως γὰρ εἴποι φόβοντες τὴν δεισι-
δαιμονίαν ἐμπέτουν εἰς ἀθέοτητα τετραχέα καὶ ἀνίτητον, ἀπερηδήσαντες ἐν μέσῳ κειμένων τῶν δούλων. *Plutarch. de*
δεισιδαιμ. in fine.

^d See the Note upon *Miscellaneous Reflections*, p. 65. where we are told, "That if, from the Experience of many
" gross Delusions of a superstitious kind, this Fear begins to turn, 'tis natural for it to run with equal Violence a con-
" trary Way. The extreme Passion for religious Objects passes into an Aversion; and a certain Horror and Dread of
" Imposture causes as great a Disturbance as even Imposture itself had done before. In such a Situation as this, the
" Mind may be easily blinded; as well in one respect as in the other. 'Tis plain both these Disorders carry something
" with them, which discovers us to be in some manner beside our Reason, and out of the right Use of Judgment and
" Understanding."

Leng. less any thing in all their Worship that could plainly signify the Unity and Perfection of the Divine Nature, but very much to mislead them to Polytheism and

S E R M. I. Idolatry, so that the greatest Part of their Religion was the mere Worship of Devils; it was much more difficult to spy the Truth through such a Veil of Darkness. But now, when juster Notions of the Divine Perfections and Attributes are set before us, as it is more culpable to fall into such absurd Superstition, so it is more inexcusable to make the Weakness and Folly of superstitious People a Pretence of throwing off all Religion.

THUS I have endeavoured to shew, that there may be other Grounds of Mens Infidelity, besides Want of Evidence, in the Principles of Religion: And I have insisted the longer upon this, because, whatever Men may pretend, I am afraid they generally take up the Conclusion, before they have thoroughly examined the Premises: that is, upon some Prejudice in themselves, or some Offence which they have taken at the Weakness and Folly of others, in the Matter of Religion, they begin to doubt whether there be any Truth at all in the Matter, and then they hunt for Arguments and Objections to improve that Doubting into a formed Disbelief or settled Infidelity.

II. I proceed, in the next place, to consider, That the Principles of Religion are of that high Nature, and universal Concernment to Mankind, that we cannot answer it to our own Reason, to be unconcerned about them; and therefore, as Rational Creatures, ought to endeavour to be satisfied about them.

IT cannot be a Matter of Indifference to us, to know whether they be true or false, without betraying very great Folly and Indiscretion. I do not as yet argue from that vast Difference in our practical Conduct, which ought to be the reasonable Consequence of believing those Principles true, in respect of what it may be supposing them altogether false, as such Conduct may arise from the Consideration of what we may expect from the Hand of God, supposing him to be what even Natural Religion teaches us; for this I shall have Occasion to mention afterwards. But I speak now of that Use which we ought to make of our Reason and Understanding, supposing us left to our own Conduct, and as yet knowing nothing of any superior Law to oblige or direct us: And even in this Case,

IT seems to be very reasonable, that every Creature should make the best use of its own Powers and Faculties that it can, let those Powers and Faculties come from whence they will, from Chance or Design; and both to employ and improve them in the best manner they are able to their own Well-being. And most other Creatures do this, as far as we can judge, where there is not any other Force to hinder them. Now if Men have Reason and Understanding, and a Power of freely applying them to, and exercising them upon different Subjects, some of which apparently tend more than others to the improving those Faculties, and of rendering the best and most valuable Part of our Nature more perfect and compleat; if we are in the least conscious of our Abilities, to chuse how we will apply them, we cannot do ourselves Right without such Application; that is, *If it be in our Power to chuse how we will employ our Reason and Thought, yet if we will not employ it upon what is proper to our Nature, as reasonable Creatures, we are then certainly culpable in making a wrong Use of our Powers; we are guilty to ourselves, and cannot be said to have done our best.*

BUT if it should be alledged, that we have indeed no such Power at all, but that all our Reasonings, and the Application of our Thoughts this Way or that Way, are the mere Effect of Matter and Motion casually working upon us, and that there is nothing voluntary in us, or any other Being whatsoever; then, I confess, Men cannot well be charged with either helping or hindering their own Reasonings; and it would be in vain to go about to persuade them to think or reason about any thing of their own accord, or to tell them that they ought to

^a See Serm. III.

take other Methods of thinking than they do; since they have not any Thoughts *Leng.* or Reasonings at their own Command. But yet, however, they ought not to be *SERM.* angry with us, or take it amiss, if we do advise them, because upon such a Sup- *I.* position, we can no more help doing this, than they can help doing the other: *~* That is, neither the one nor the other can think, or reason, or advise, or be advised, or take any thing well or ill otherwise than just as they do; and at this rate all Discourse and Reasoning whatever would be no more than the Winds blowing, or Waves beating one against another. And when Men once come to this Degree of Absurdity, and will stick to it, I cannot see how it is possible to apply any Cure to them from Reason and Argument. And yet to this Absurdity they must come in the End, who will not allow any Principle in the World distinct from Matter and Motion: for a transverse Declination of Atoms is no more Free Will, or a Power of chusing and refusing, than their perpendicular Descent.

BUT let it be allowed, that we have any Power over our own Actions, and can chuse which Way we will apply our Thoughts and Reasonings, and determine ourselves to this or that Subject; if we are capable of any free *Use of the Understanding, in endeavouring to find out the Meaning of any Proposition whatsoever, in considering the Nature of the Evidence for and against it, and in judging of it according to the seeming Force or Weakness of the Evidence,* as those, who are pleased to call themselves Free-thinkers, ought to grant, since they make it the very Definition of Free-thinking, which they claim as their Right; then if we would act like Men, that can use this Power, we ought to consider our own Situation in the World, what Rank and Order we stand in, and what Relation we bear to other Beings. The first and most natural Thought should be, how we came hither, and from whence we had those Powers and Faculties of Mind which we have, or think we have. And since we may be very certain, that we did not make ourselves, or bring ourselves into this Part of the World, or chuse this Rank of Beings, in which we are placed; whether we be pleased or displeased with being what we are, it is very reasonable for us to consider, whether we have any Power to continue ourselves in this Condition, if we like it, or to alter and amend it, if we like it not. And if we also find that we have not any such Ability as this absolutely at our Command, we ought then to enquire farther, whether there be without us any other superior Power, which may be any way concerned with us, or for us, from whom we may expect or hope for Assistance, upon Application to it. And until we have made such Enquiry, we cannot be said to have shewn any just Concern for our own Being, and consequently have not acted reasonably towards ourselves, if we have the Power of making such Enquiry, and neglect to put it in Practice.

NAY, farther: Suppose that we have not of ourselves gone this reasonable Way to work at first, but our Thoughts have been carried away at random to other Matters of less Moment, without considering what was a proper Employment for them; yet if only some of our Fellow Creatures have told us accidentally, that they believe, or have heard, that there is some such superior Being, as exercises a Power over us; or suppose we ourselves have had some casual Suggestions about it in our own Mind; or upon viewing the Things without us, should at any Time have been apt to suspect, that some intelligent Being, besides Mankind, and more powerful than Man, might be concerned in it (and surely there is no Man, that ever arrived to the Use of Reason and Discretion, but what must, one time or other, have had as much Notice of the Being of a God, as this comes to, presented to his Thoughts) I say, supposing this, no Man can excuse himself to his own Reason, that would never in earnest examine, whether such Inclination, Suggestion, or Suspicion had any Ground or Foundation: there being no Exercise of the Mind more proper, because there is nothing, in which a Man's self, and whatever belongs to his Well-being, as a reasonable Creature, is more immediately concerned than this. All other Speculations are foreign to us in respect of this: but this concerns ourselves most intimately; and therefore,

Leng. how much soever we may pity those, who, being sensible of the Nature and Tendency of the great Principles of Religion, and how much it imports Mankind to be well assured whether they be true or no, do therefore labour seriously to find out the Truth, but by entering into a wrong Method of Enquiry, cannot as yet arrive at any Satisfaction about it, but are full of Doubts and Scruples, which they endeavour to have cleared up by the best Information they can procure; yet for those, who willingly chuse to employ themselves upon any other Enquiry that comes in their Way, rather than this; not because they are already satisfied about this, but because they care not whether ever they be, and therefore are as indifferent and unconcerned, about knowing whether there be a God or a future State of their own Souls, as they are whether the Moon or other Planets be inhabited; one can hardly tell how to bear such a Proceeding, without Indignation at so great an Abuse of their Reason; and a Man had need to have all the Compassion which the Christian Religion teaches us, to be earnestly concerned for those, who can even boast of their being so wilfully unconcerned for themselves.

THE remaining Considerations (which will farther enforce this) I shall reserve to the next Opportunity.

Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be Honour and Glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

S E R M O N II.

Preached *February* the 4th, 1716-17.

HEB. iii. 12.

Take heed, Brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil Heart of Unbelief, in departing from the Living God.

I N my former Discourse, upon this Subject, I propos'd to apply myself chiefly *Leng.* to such as deny or dispute against the common Principles of Religion, not *S E R M.* only Christian but Natural; and such as think it a very innocent or indiffer- *II.* ent Matter, either to believe them or not believe them, as it shall happen, as having respect only to their present Convenience, and not thinking themselves concerned about any future Consequences: And my Design was to endeavour to persuade them from common Reason, that it is their Duty not to be unconcerned in the Case, and let the Matter go at random, without troubling their Heads about it; but to give the Arguments that have been, or may be offered in behalf of the Principles of Religion, a fair, serious, and impartial Hearing and Examination: And in order to this, I desired that the following Particulars might be considered without Prejudice.

I. T H A T there may be other probable Causes of Infidelity often assigned, besides Want of Evidence for the Matter propos'd to be believed, even when this is pretended as an Excuse for it; because it is evident, that in all other Cases Mens Interests, Passions, or other Indispositions, will prevent them from seeing the Force of an Argument, which is in its own Nature very good, and sufficient to convince another Man, that is not so indisposed.

II. T H A T the Principles of Religion are of that high Nature and universal Concernment to Mankind, that we cannot answer it to our own Reason to be unconcerned about them; and therefore that we must, as rational Creatures, endeavour to be well satisfied one Way or other about them. To find out the Truth in this Case, is the most proper Employment of our Reason and Understanding.

III. T H A T if we have sufficient Reason to believe the great Principles of Religion; such as the Being of a God, and a Providence, and a future State, &c. our Unbelief will not excuse us from being criminal in the Sight of God.

IV. T H A T it is unreasonable for any Man to endeavour to persuade others out of the Principles of Religion, 'till he himself is first evidently convinced that they are false, and disadvantageous to Mankind.

V. T H A T it is still more unreasonable to make them the Subject of Raillery and Ridicule.

T H E

Leng. THE two first of these are what I have already spoken to, and shall now proceed to the Third, *viz.*

II.

III. THAT if we have sufficient Reason to believe the great Principles of Religion, such as the Being of a God, and a Providence, and a future State after this Life, &c. our Unbelief will not excuse us from being criminal in the Sight of God.

I HAVE already shewn, that we are indeed culpable to ourselves and inexcusable to our own Reason, if we make no Enquiry into those Things, in which our own State and Condition is so nearly concerned: and we act against our Nature, as we are reasonable Beings, when we are unconcerned about them. The Thing that I would now consider, is, Whether if we have sufficient Arguments laid before us, to prove the Being and Attributes of God, provided we make an honest and impartial Use of our own Reason and Understanding, we may not be obliged at our own peril to attend to them. That is, supposing God to be the sovereign Governor of the World, and to take notice of all the Actions and Dispositions of Men, and to have given them Laws, either naturally arising from the Constitution of Things, or revealed from himself, and to have set up a standing Proof of such his Being; whether all rational Creatures, that are capable of knowing him, be not under such a natural Obligation to take notice of him, that they may be justly made to suffer, *i. e.* may be punished for their Neglect of it. And this I think may be consistent with the highest Reason; and Disbelief may be criminal, where the Motives to believe are sufficient to convince any honest Mind, and such as no Man can be ignorant of, without some previous Fault of his own Will, and the Things offered to our Belief such as every Man must necessarily own himself to be concerned in.

St. PAUL, speaking of the *Gentile* World who had revolted from the true Knowledge of God, and become vain in their Imaginations and Reasonings about him, having laid down this as a Principle, that, *That which may be known of God is manifest among them, for God hath shewed it unto them; for the invisible Things of him, from the Creation of the World are clearly seen, being understood by the Things that are made, even his eternal Power and Godhead;* concludes from thence, that *they were without Excuse, because that when they knew God, i. e. had such evident natural Means of knowing him, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, &c.* I do not here urge this Passage of St. Paul, as of an inspired Writer, by way of Authority to decide the Point in hand; but I produce it only as an Argument from Reason and the Nature of the Thing, which carries its own Weight along with it, abstracted from any superior Authority: and the plain Sense of the Argument is this, That if God hath shewed sufficient Evidence of his own Being and Power, unto all Men from the Frame of Things, they are without Excuse, who take no notice of him, nor acknowledge any Dependence upon him: and consequently, if he be a Law-giver and a Judge (as has been universally allowed by those who owned him as the Maker and Governor of the World) he must make a Difference between those who act in Conformity to the Nature of Things, freely owning their natural State of Subjection to him, and those who renounce such Order of Subjection; and he may deal with those Men as Offenders, who disown his Authority by bringing his Being into question. Acts of Unbelief being indeed no other (in this Case) than Acts of wilful Disobedience, where the Evidences of his Being are so plain, that it must be the Fault of the Will and not of the Understanding, if we be not moved by them; affected Ignorance will be no Excuse in such a Case, where the Means of Information are so obvious.

IT is well known, that there have been some of late Years among us, who have publicly set themselves to weaken the Force of this Argument, by insinuating, that if a Man should be supposed to incur any Penalty from the Hand of God for want of any Belief, though it were even that of his own Being, it would be a great Diminution to that entire Freedom of Thinking, which they pretend

God

God has made the natural Right of every Man, and which it cannot be consistent with his Goodness thus to abridge. And they farther tell us, that ^a *a Man may possess his Soul in Peace, as having an Expectation of enjoying all the good Things which God can bestow, and no Fear of any future Misery, or Evil from his Hands; and the very worst of his State can only be, that he is pleasantly deceived.* Now if these Patrons of *Free-thinking* (as they desire to be called) would keep honestly to their own Definition of *Free-thinking*, and mean no more by it than only ^b *the Use of the Understanding, in endeavouring to find out the Meaning of any Proposition whatsoever, in considering the Nature of the Evidence for and against it, and in judging of it according to the seeming Force or Weakness of the Evidence;* I know no Man of Understanding and Integrity that could justly oppose such Freedom. For it will readily be granted by all, that ^c *Men who use their Understandings, must have more Sense than they who use them not:* for they are improved by Use and Application, as other Faculties are: and I have before observed, that we are under a natural Obligation, even to our own Reason, to make the best Use and Improvement of them that we can. But if instead of defending Men's Right to use their Understandings; under the Name of *Free-thinking*, they are pleased to call any odd or extravagant Opinion *Free-thinking*, provided it be but contrary to those which are commonly received; a Man must use his Understanding very untowardly, that can believe this consistent with the Definition. For if, as these Authors seem to allow (whether sincerely or not, I will not now examine) ^d *The Knowledge of some Truths be required of us by God, and if the Knowledge of others be useful to Society;* then certainly the holding at all Adventures, and without any serious Examination, Assertions contradictory to such Truths, or inconsistent with them, cannot be any Instance of such *Free-thinking* as we have a Right to, but either Want of Thinking, or an Abuse of it.

I AM very ready to acknowledge, that God has never obliged us to know or believe any Truth, but what he has given us some previous Means of knowing, or sufficient Ground of believing: but then on the other hand he may certainly, without any Impeachment of his Goodness, oblige us to use those Means honestly, and require a sincere Love of Truth from us. He may, in order to our own Happiness, forbid Pride, and Self-conceit, and Affectations of Singularity, and enjoin us to lay aside Malice and Envy, and to see that no undue Prejudice or Partiality mix themselves in our Searches of Truth. He that allows us to reason freely, may certainly command us to reason justly, and attend to proper and competent Arguments to prove any Truth which he requires us to know, and to be moved by rational Inducements to believe. And in what Way soever he condescends to teach us, we ought to be ready to be informed. Now these Authors grant that ^e *to be informed, consists in being made to think justly and truly of Things;* and to be obliged to this in the Application of our Reason, is no more contrary to the free Use of our Understanding, than obliging us to the Practice of Virtue and Morality is to the Freedom of our Wills. To think freely in the finding out any Truth, requires, not that we should think or judge of it just what we please, but that we should consider impartially the Nature of the Evidence for and against it; and when we have all the Light we can procure, then to be determined by superior Evidence. But to contradict a Truth, without enquiring into it, only because it is vulgarly received, when to a considering Man there is good Evidence for it, is not *Free-thinking* but Bondage of Thought. For a Man's Reasoning may be as much bound, and his Thinking as much biased by taking a Prejudice against any thing, as for it; and he thinks just as freely, that takes all current Opinions for true, as he that takes them all for false; that is, indeed, neither the one nor the other. In Truths which are capable of sufficient Proof, either Moral or Mathematical, he ought not to be accounted a *Free-thinker*, who at the first appearance boldly denies them before he has considered the Evidence. For Instance, suppose any Man not entered in Mathematicks, upon viewing a great Va-

^a Vid. *Free-thinking*, p. 38. ^b p. 5. ^c p. 120. ^d p. 6. ^e p. 15.

Leng. riety of Triangles and other Figures, should take a fancy to deny *that the three*
 S E R M. *Angles of any Triangle are equal to two Right Angles, or to the three Angles of*
 II. *any other Triangle*, because he will not give himself the Trouble of considering
 the Demonstration; such a Practice would hardly be called Freedom of Reason-
 ing, but Want of it. When Mr. *Hobbes*,^f who is alledged for an Instance of
 Free-thinking, pretended with great Confidence to have demonstrated the Quadra-
 ture of a Circle, those who had thought more freely, and were better able to judge
 of the Matter, thought that his *Fastus* and Self-conceit had hindered his Thinking
 from being so free and impartial in the Case as it ought to have been, though
 he thought fit to write *Contra Fastum Professorum Geometriæ*. He whose Thoughts
 are justest, and most according to the Nature of Things, is the truest *Free-thinker*,
 and it is not the open Profession of every wild and incoherent Fancy which comes
 into a Man's Head, that is fit to denominate him such. For Thinking, even ac-
 cording to their own Definition, implies Reasoning; but the affirming any Propo-
 sition without just Ground, or the denying any Proposition at a Venture, without
 examining, or the refusing such Assent as the Nature of the Evidence requires, is
 not Reasoning, and therefore not Thinking, much less Free-thinking according
 to the Definition. For, according to these Authors, ^g *What is a Restraint of*
Free-thinking on any Subject, but somewhat which hinders me from thinking on
that Subject? 'Tis no matter therefore whether the Hindrance be from without
 or from within, provided I am hindered. But I believe the greatest and most
 insuperable Hindrances to Freedom of Thinking and Reasoning, are such as Men
 put themselves under, by indulging their Pride or their Passions, their Pleasure
 or their Sloth. *Free-thinking* (as these Authors allow^h) *requires great Diligence*
and Application of Mind; and he that applies himself to it, must, by that Habit,
expel all those vicious Dispositions and Passions, by which every Man out of Action
is tossed and governed; therefore they that will not be at the Pains first to free
 themselves from all those vicious Dispositions, which hinder them from being im-
 partial and sincere in their Searches of Truth, do in vain arrogate to themselves
 the specious Title of *Free-thinkers*; which indeed would be a Title of Honour,
 if it were applied to none but those who truly deserve it, by a free and ingenuous
 Use of their Reason in the finding out of Truth, and honestly submitting to it when
 found. But when it is applied to those who have no other Pretence to it, except
 the assuming a Liberty of denying the plainest Truths, and reducing all Reason
 to downright Scepticism; we cannot but then think the Name has lost much of
 its Reputation by being so misapplied.

TRUE Liberty of Action does not consist in doing what we please without any
 Controul, but in being free from all outward Force, to govern ourselves by the
 Law of Reason; and he is no more free that is the Slave of his own Passions, than
 he that is under Subjection to the mere Will of another Man. So Freedom of
 Thinking does not consist in an Ability to dissent from the Principles of Reason,
 but in being superior to all those Prejudices, either from ourselves or others,
 which hinder us from assenting to them. If therefore God hath given us such a
 Liberty, he may, with the highest Reason, make us responsible to himself for
 the Use of it: and to suppose that we are so responsible is not to deny this Free-
 dom, but to assert it; because if we had it not, we could not be answerable for
 the Abuse of it. Now upon this Foundation, we are not only allowed, but ob-
 liged, to enquire into the Grounds of Religion, and bring them to a fair and
 impartial Examination: and the Reason why God Almighty may justly condemn
 us for our Infidelity is, because if we use this Freedom honestly, we cannot fail
 of seeing sufficient Reason to convince us. Whatever evil Consequences therefore
 are threatened to those that will not believe, they are not designed to hinder our
 Freedom of Enquiry into the Grounds of our Belief, but to excite our Diligence,
 and secure our Integrity in enquiring. If the Evidence of a supreme Being that
 governs the World, and some other first Principles of Religion, be such as will
 not force itself upon us without our own Attention, that there may be something

^f Vid. *Free thinking*, p. 170. ^g p. 15. ^h p. 121.

voluntary in our Faith ; but yet be such as cannot, without a manifest wilful Mis-
 use of our Understanding, be withstood when attended to ; it must be *an evil* Leng. SERM. II.
Heart of Unbelief that departs *from the living God*. And the natural Conse-
 quences of such Departure may be very miserable ; and what they will be, we
 may with most Certainty learn from himself. Upon this Principle the Christian
 Religion, though it condemns those that wilfully refuse to hearken to it, yet,
 conscious of its own Truth and Sincerity, it freely offers itself to the strictest Scr-
 tiny, and commands us to *prove all Things* in order to *hold fast that which is*
good : which two are no ways inconsistent with one another. For where an im-
 partial Enquiry will necessarily lead us to the Acknowledgement of a fundamental
 Truth, there the owning of that Truth may as justly be the Subject of a Com-
 mand, as the sincere Use of the Means leading to it ; and God may punish the
 Perverseness of our Wills in one Case, as well as the other.

I SHALL not at present urge this Point any farther, because I may have occa-
 sionⁱ hereafter to say something upon the like Argument, when I come to shew
 that we may lie under a natural Obligation to the Belief of a God, and may
 make ourselves incapable of receiving any Good from him by a Denial of his
 Being.

THEREFORE I proceed now in the next Place to consider ;

IV. THAT it is unreasonable for any Man to endeavour to persuade others
 out of the Principles of Religion, till he himself is first evidently convinced that
 they are false, and disadvantageous to Mankind.

I DO not hereby mean that a Man, who has any real Doubts or Scruples in his
 Mind concerning the Validity of any Argument, even for the principal Points of
 Religion, should not have Liberty fairly to propose his Doubts to such as have
 Ability to judge of them, in order to have the Matter freely debated, and thereby
 set in the clearest Light : For this may be Part of a just and necessary Enquiry
 towards the full Satisfaction of a Man's own Mind. And I am well persuaded,
 that such an ingenuous Liberty would never do any Harm to true Religion, which
 is never afraid of a fair and impartial Trial. And therefore I am not now begging
 Quarter for the Principles of Religion, as if I were afraid that these Men had
 some unanswerable Arguments which, if known, would quite destroy those Prin-
 ciples : but my Meaning is, that no Man can pretend a Right, without breaking
 in upon the Liberties of other People, to go about openly to persuade others to
 that, of which he himself is not fully persuaded. And if this were granted, I
 believe that those who dispute in favour of Atheistical Principles, would be re-
 duced to a small Number. For however odd and singular some Men may love
 to appear, in their Reasonings with others ; yet if we could come at their secret
 Thoughts of the Matter at all their different Hours, I do not question but we
 should find, that they have many secret Misgivings in their Minds upon their own
 professed Arguments ; however they may outwardly seem to bear up against such
 inward Doubts or Fears.

THE Epicurean Poet himself fairly owns this, when he tells us, that *though*
there are some Men who openly profess not to be afraid of future Punishment so
much

ⁱ See Serm. IX.

^k Nam quod sæpe homines morbos magis esse timendos,
 Infamemque ferunt vitam quam tartara leti,
 Et se scire animi naturam sanguinis esse,
 Nec prorsum quidquam nostræ rationis egere ;
 Hinc licet advortas animum magis omnia laudis,
 Aut etiam venti (si fert ita forte voluntas)
 Jactari causa, quam quod res ipsa probetur ;
 Extorres iidem patriâ, longèque fugati
 Conspectu ex hominum foedati crimine turpi,
 Omnibus ærumnis adfecti denique vivunt ;
 Et quocunque tamen miseri venêre, parentant,
 Et nigras maectant pecudes & manibu' divis
 Inferias mittunt ; multoque in rebus acerbis
 Acrîus advortunt animos ad Relligionem.

Leng. much as of a Fit of Sickness, as knowing the Soul to be mortal, and needing no farther Argument to prove it; yet it may be observed, that this is all rather Pretence and Affectation, than any real Persuasion from the Truth of the Thing. For let the same Men be banished from human Society for any Crime, and they presently become the most miserable Creatures, and fall to the most abject Superstition. In Times of Adversity Mens Minds are most sensibly affected towards Religion: in such Times therefore a Man's real Sentiments are to be known, when the inmost Truth will break out, and he can no longer personate what he really is not.

THIS free Confession, from one whose professed Design it was to destroy entirely all Belief of a Providence, plainly shews, that there are very strong Propensions in human Nature to the Belief of invifible Powers, and of a future Account, which cannot easily be destroyed; and which therefore have a deeper Foundation in the Nature of Things than some Men are willing to own: and though Men strive to root them out at some Seasons, and in some Companies; yet at other times they cannot prevent their springing up again in their own Minds. And indeed we plainly find, that most of those very Men who designedly set themselves to overthrow the Force of all other Mens Arguments for the Being of a God and his Providence; yet when they themselves come to reason in earnest about it, of their own accord, they generally bring themselves to own it in effect, upon some Principle or other of their own establishing, which perhaps in reality has not so much Weight in it, as those which they despise because they are common. This shews, that though their Pride and Self-conceit make them willing to decry the Reasonings of all other Men, yet they are no Ways inwardly satisfied with the contrary Conclusion. They can of themselves see the Absurdity of denying the Existence of such a Being, though they quarrel with the Premisses, upon which any other Men endeavour to prove it. Now this Proceeding is what may be justly complained of, that Men should go about by all Ways to weaken the Belief of that in others, which they themselves, at the bottom, either own to be true, or at least are not fully satisfied of the contrary. This would hardly be thought fair and equal Dealing in any other Case; and much less should it be so in this, which is of the utmost Concern to all Men. It is an unreasonable Practice in respect of God Almighty, supposing him to be; and in respect of Men, supposing them to believe his Being. For,

1. SUPPOSE it be true, that there is a God and a Providence, and that these Men are not so hardy, as to pretend absolutely to demonstrate the contrary; it may be that he is such a Governor of the World as is withal a King, or Magistrate, a Lawgiver, and Judge of Men's Actions, as the Generality of Men do, in some respect or other, own him to be. Now if I go about to weaken Men's Belief of his Being, or to argue against it, what am I doing all the while but seducing them, as much as I can, from that natural Allegiance which they think they owe him? I am certainly destroying his Title, if I am either making his Being uncertain, or persuading Men that he has no such Relation to them, or Concern for them. Supposing then it were not yet known, what Punishment he would inflict upon such Seducers, yet certainly they could not but of themselves think it reasonable, that he should treat them in a different manner from his faithful Subjects. Though his Goodness be infinite, as no doubt it is, yet it cannot but look upon such Men as criminal; and the greater his Goodness is, the more criminal it is to abuse it, and to withdraw others from it. This makes it an unreasonable Practice in respect of God Almighty. But,

2. IN respect of Men, who are supposed to believe his Being, it is unreasonable, because unless we are very sure that they are under a Delusion, and that we can certainly better their Condition by undeceiving them, we act very unkindly and uncharitably towards them, in trying to persuade them that they are deceived in an Opinion or Belief of that Being, on which they think their chief Happiness depends.

*Quo magis in dubiis hominem spectare periculis
Convenit, advorsisque in rebus noscere qui fit.
Nam veræ voces tum demum pectore ab imo
Ejiciuntur; & eripitur persona, manet res.* *Lucret. lib. 3. § 41*

A CERTAIN Author, who is not generally thought to have any Prejudice or Partiality in favour of revealed Religion, owns, ^{Leng.} *It is impossible that any but an* ^{SERM.} *ill-natured Man can wish against the Being of a God, for this is wishing against* ^{II.} *the publick, and even against one's own private Good too, if rightly understood.* Now certainly, what cannot be wished against without great Ill-nature towards Mankind, cannot be attempted to be disproved with any good-natured Design towards such as really believe it. For if it really be an Happiness to Mankind that there is a God, the present Sense of that Happiness must, in a great measure, depend upon their knowing or believing that there is one. Upon which account I cannot but wonder at another Saying¹ of the same Author, which seems to contradict the former; That, *as Religion stands amongst us, there are a great many good People, who would have less Fear in being exposed (to forlorn Nature and a fatherless World) and would be easier perhaps, in their Minds if they were assured they had only mere Chance to trust to: For no body trembles to think there should be no God, but rather that there should be one.* But certainly every good Man would tremble to think he had been thus deceived in all his Expectations. This Thought would be more terrible to him, than the Prospect of losing the kindest and best Parent in the World, in the most helpless Condition; for do what he will, he can never be secure against any kind of Misery, where Chance alone governs all things. So that a rational Creature cannot be easy under the Apprehension of being so exposed any way, but by thinking as little as possible of his own Circumstances, that is, by divesting himself of Reason and Thought. But under the Conduct of an infinitely wise, and good, and powerful Being, he may be sure that no real Harm can befall him without his own Fault. And therefore if a Man were even fully persuaded in his own Mind, that there is no God, yet so long as he knows, that the Belief of him is what all good Men may take comfort in, it would be a very spiteful and ill-natured Thing to endeavour to rob them of this Comfort, without proposing something better and more certain. But when he can pretend to no such full Persuasion himself, but only to be doubtful or sceptical in the Matter, to attempt the same Thing is intolerable. They who are weak enough to imagine, that the Principles of Religion have no real Foundation, but were at first invented by wise Men for the good Government of the World, and to keep Mankind in order, are thereby obliged to acknowledge their Usefulness to the Well-being of human Society. And therefore, even upon their own Supposition, it would be unreasonable for them to weaken the Force of those Principles, if they consulted either the Good of others or themselves, unless they could propose some other Method, which would evidently have a more universal good Effect. It would certainly be their wisest way to keep this Secret to themselves, if they were sure they had it; but when they are not sure, it is both foolish and malicious to pretend to persuade others that they have it. And upon the whole I cannot but think it a reasonable Caution, which Tully puts into the Mouth of Balbus the Stoic, in the Conclusion of his Argument for Providence, that ^m *it is an evil and impious Custom to dispute against the Being of a God, whether it be done in earnest, or only in Pretence and Affectation.*

THIS leads me to consider in the last Place,

V. THAT it is still more unreasonable to make these Principles of Religion the Subject of Raillery and Ridicule.

FOR whatever may be pretended by those who sometimes dispute against Religion, that they do it to excite others to the more vigorous Defense of it, and to clear up any Arguments that may be doubtful or obscure; nothing of this kind can be alledged in favour of jesting upon it or ridiculing it; because this is treating it as not fit to be seriously considered. For no Man of Sense ever treats that with Ridicule, which he does not either think contemptible, or design to make so. Wherever the Life, or Estate, or very great Interest of any Man is concerned, a

^k Letter of Enthusiasm, p. 35.
five ex animo id fit, five simulatè.

^l pag. 40.

^m Mala enim & impia consuetudo est contra Deos disputandi, De Nat. Deorum, in fine.

Leng. Man of an ordinary Capacity will naturally say, such a thing is no *jesting Matter*.
 SERM. Now certainly, the Being of a God and a future Judgment, and the like, are
 II. Things of vastly more Moment to those who believe them, than the greatest worldly Interest can be; and this even they, that pretend not to believe them, cannot but know: and therefore if they had no other Reason to restrain them, yet even Decency and Respect to the common Sentiments of Mankind should make them forbear such unseasonable Jesting.

I KNOW there are some that think it a plausible Plea which is offered in Excuse of this Practice, when it is said that "Ridicule is the proper Test of what is serious, because a Subject that will not bear Raillery, is suspicious, just as a Jest that will not bear a serious Examination, is false Wit; and that which can be shewn only in a certain Light, is questionable. Truth, it is supposed, may bear all Lights, and one of those principal Lights or natural Mediums, by which Things are to be viewed, in order to a thorough Recognition, is Ridicule itself, or that Manner of Proof, by which we discern whatever is liable to just Raillery in any Subject. From hence they would insinuate, that true Religion can never suffer by this Method, though Imposture may. That Ridicule, if it be wrong placed, will recoil upon itself, and be its own Corrector in the End, and so it may without any Harm be freely left to take its Course." And as an Instance of this it is alledged, that "The divinest Man that had appeared ever in the Heathen World, was in the Height of witty Times, and by the wittiest of all Poets, most abominably ridiculed in a whole Comedy writ and acted on purpose. But so far was this from sinking his Reputation, or suppressing his Philosophy, that they both increased the more for it; and he apparently grew to be more the Envy of other Teachers. He was not only contented to be ridiculed, but, that he might help the Poet as much as possible, he presented himself openly in the Theatre, that his real Figure (which was no advantageous one) might be compared with that which the witty Poet had brought as his Representative on the Stage. Such was his good Humour. Nor could there be in the World a greater Testimony of the invincible Goodness of the Man, or a greater Demonstration that there was no Imposture either in his Character or Opinions. This is thought a specious Plea for the Freedom of this kind of Wit upon all Subjects.

BUT now granting, that Truth itself cannot suffer by such Usage (for what is true cannot be made false by being ridiculed) yet certainly it may lose very much of that good effect which it might otherwise have upon the Minds of Men, by being thus treated.

THOSE with whom we are now arguing, will readily allow, that all Men are not competent Judges of Wit, nor can at the first Appearance, without Examination, distinguish between what is ridiculed and what really deserves to be so. And therefore, though a Man by unseasonable Jesting upon a wrong Subject, may in the end make himself truly ridiculous, yet to those who cannot presently discern the false Wit, the Subject itself in the mean time appears contemptible, and much Mischief may be done before the proper Cure can be applied. And of this the Case of *Socrates*, now alledged, and the pernicious Effect this kind of Wit had, in bringing him unjustly to Death, is a very plain Instance: For when those who designed his Ruin, durst not attempt it in the Way of a publick Accusation, because of the great Esteem which Men of Virtue and Understanding had for him, 'till they had first prepared the Populace to bear it, they hired *Aristophanes* to use all his Wit to expose him upon the Stage in a Comedy, after the most ludicrous manner; which he was the more easily induced to do, because *Socrates* (though a Person of as much true Wit and good Humour as any Man of his Age, yet) had always expressed a great Aversion to that scurrilous and illiberal sort of Wit, for which *Aristophanes* valued himself. And thus when they had, by means of the Poet, made the Philosopher and his Doctrine the Object of Scorn and Contempt among the deluded People, they could then successfully prosecute their villainous Intentions against him.

^a Vid. *Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour*, p. 61, &c.

^o Letter concerning *Enthusiasm*, p. 31

^p Vid. *Æliani Var. Hist.* lib. 2. cap. 13.

I GRANT indeed, that afterwards, when the People came to themselves, they *Leng.*
 dearly repented of this Delusion; and that this Usage in ⁹ the *End proved the highest* *SERM.*
Advantage to that Character and Doctrine, which having stood the Proof were *II.*
found so solid and just. But what is this to the Purpose? Is this Practice the
 more commendable, because Truth and Sincerity will be able to stand the Shock
 of it? Is a malicious Piece of Wit, or a false Accusation, ever the more innocent,
 because the Integrity and Reputation of him who is thus attacked will after Trial
 shine the brighter? What some of those who look upon themselves as the only
 polite Writers may think, I cannot tell; but a Man of plain and ordinary Under-
 standing must needs take this for a very odd Way of defending what they call
 the *Freedom of Wit and Humour upon all Subjects*; especially by one who had
 before told us, *He never heard that the antient Heathens were so well advised in*
their ill Purpose of suppressing the Christian Religion in its first Rise, as to make use
at any time of this (Bart'l'mew-fair) Method: But he is persuaded of this, that
had the Truth of the Gospel been any way surmountable, they would have bid much
fairer for the silencing it, if they had chose to bring our primitive Founders upon
the Stage in a pleasanter Way than that of Bear Skins and Pitch Barrels; and he
 is apt to think, that if the Jews had tried their Wit and Malice this Way against
 our Saviour and his Apostles, they might possibly have done our Religion more Harm
 than by all their other Ways of Severity.

THIS it seems is allowed to be the most probable Way of doing Mischief to
 Religion, but the Trial of it is recommended, because Truth will in the end be
 superior to it. And whether any other wicked Method of abusing or suppressing
 Truth may not be defended upon the same Principle, That *great is Truth and*
will prevail, I may leave to any Man's Consideration. However, that we may
 not wrong this Author, it must be owned, that he sometimes speaks of treating
 Religion with good Manners, and ^r tells us, he writes in *Defense only of that sort*
of Freedom which is taken among Gentlemen and Friends, who know one another
perfectly well; and though as to what passes in select Company, where Friends meet
knowingly, and with that very Design of exercising their Wit and looking freely
into all Subjects, he sees no Pretence for any one to be offended at the Way of Rail-
lery and Humour, which is the very Life of such Conversation; yet he owns that
to start Questions, or manage Debates which offend the Publick Ear, is to be want-
ing in that Respect which is due to common Society, and that such Subjects should
either not be treated at all in publick, or in such a manner as to occasion no Scan-
dal or Disturbance; that the Publick is not on any account to be laughed at, to its
Face; and that the Lovers of Mankind respect and honour Conventions and Socie-
ties of Men, more than this comes to.

Now it would be some Happiness, if these witty Gentlemen would be per-
 suaded to contain themselves within such Bounds. But that I am afraid will be
 very difficult, since if the Plea before-mentioned, in Defense of Ridicule, have
 any Weight in it, it will certainly carry them much farther. And indeed, we sel-
 dom find any of those, who think they have abundance of Wit, fit to be exercised
 on all Subjects, but they are very impatient of having it confined to so narrow a
 Compass. It would be almost as easy to persuade some Men, that they want Wit,
 as to prescribe them such Limits in the Use of it. The Truth is, though one
 would think it but a very reasonable Request, that Men should forbear making a
 Jest of any serious Argument, especially in Matters of great Moment, 'till they
 have by fair Reasoning shewn it to be absurd or ridiculous; yet generally speak-
 ing, these bold sort of Jesters take the contrary Method; they make use of Scoff-
 ing and Ridicule as a Crutch to supply their Defect of true Arguments, or as a
 Cover to keep their false ones from being seriously examined. But to conclude
 this Matter, if Men would really act according to the Principles of Reason, or the
 Rules of Decency, or a just Concern even for their own Reputation among con-
 siderate Men, they would not venture to treat the Principles of Religion in a
 manner so unbecoming the Nature of the Thing, and so highly offensive to all

⁹ Letter concerning Enthusiasm, p. 32.

^r Ib. p. 29.

^s Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour, p. 75, 76.

Leng. that believe it; and above all, for any thing they can know to the contrary, so infinitely dangerous to themselves in the Issue, if it be really true. And such I hope
 S E R M. II. it will appear to all impartial Enquirers after Truth, when it comes to be fairly examined.

AND thus I have gone through those several Considerations which I proposed at first, not as a Proof of the Truth and Certainty of the Principles of Religion, but as a Preparative towards the sincere and impartial weighing and examining of them. For I am fully persuaded, if this could but be obtained, Infidelity might soon be convinced of its own Weakness, since the Strength of it lies not so much in real Argument, as in unreasonable Prejudice.

THE Sum therefore of what I would earnestly recommend to all those, who desire to find the Truth in Matters of Religion, is Sincerity of Heart. Let them seriously and honestly examine their own Hearts in the first Place, before they offer to judge of the Evidence; whether there be not in them any latent Prejudice against Religion, any secret Wish or Desire that it may not be true, because of its crossing some favourite Passion or vicious Inclination, which they would willingly pursue without Controul; whether there be nothing of inward Pride or Self-conceit, which makes them affect an Opinion, because it is singular or new, or reject one, because it is old or vulgar; and whether they have not taken unreasonable Offense at all Religion, because of the Abuses that have been made of it, and to avoid one Extreme, have without Consideration run into another: because any of these, or the like Prejudices, will certainly indispose them towards the sincere Search of Truth; and will make both the Arguments and Objections appear very different from what they really are.

PURITY of Heart is the surest Way to see God, even in this Sense of seeing Him.

AND that there may not be found in any of us *an evil Heart of Unbelief in departing from the Living God*, may that Supreme Being grant unto us *All*.

S E R M O N III.

Preached *March* the 4th, 1717.

H E B. xi. 6.

But without Faith it is impossible to please God: for he that cometh to God, must believe that He is, and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

THE great Design of the Apostle in this whole Chapter, is to set forth the Nature and Effects of *Faith*, which, as we are told in the first Verse, is *the Substance of Things hoped for, the Evidence of Things not seen; i.e. it is a firm Persuasion of Mind concerning the Truth of something future, which we hope for, and expect will hereafter come to pass; and a Conviction of the real Existence of some Things, which are either in their own Nature invisible to bodily Eyes, or which, at least to us, cannot at present be seen, because they are at a distance in respect of Place or of Time, past or future.* And by this, he says, *the Elders obtained a good Report:* that is, by virtue of this Belief of an invisible Principle, and a Persuasion of the Reality of Things not subject to Sense, those who lived in the earlier Ages of the World, behaved themselves so towards the Supreme Being, and towards their Fellow Creatures, with whom they conversed, that their Names were thought fit to be transmitted to Posterity for their Piety and Virtue, in that Revelation which God was afterwards pleased to make of his Will: And therefore the Instances, that are most particularly insisted on, are of those who lived before any written Revelation, and were governed by these first and natural Principles of Religion; though by keeping to them, they had sometimes particular Discoveries of the Will of God vouchsafed to them. In this Chapter therefore we have, as it were, the first Elements of Religious Faith laid down and exemplified, in the Practice and Behaviour of those, whose Lives were influenced by it.

THE first Instance which he gives of Faith, is a general Belief of the Creation of the World, by which we understand or conceive in our Minds, that by the sole Power or Command of a Supreme Being, whom we call God, the World itself, and all that belongs to it, was at first brought into Being, so that the Things which are now seen, were made, but not out of Things which did appear; that which had no Being, by an Almighty Power began to be. The Manner, in which this was done, was in its own Nature invisible to human Sight, other Things being first brought into Being before Mankind existed; and it is impossible to have it now represented over again to us. But however, from what we do see, or from some other Reasonings about our own Existence, or otherwise, we do believe an invisible Maker and Governor of the World. *Through Faith we understand, that the Worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that Things which are seen, were not made of Things which do appear.*

THE next Instance of Faith, is a Belief of God's having a Regard to the Actions of Men, and their Behaviour both towards him and towards one another,

Leng. according to the Difference of which he has a different Respect towards them, and
 SERM. their intended Worship of him; as in the Case of *Abel* and *Cain*, one of which,
 III. by reason of this Belief, offered a Sacrifice more acceptable to God than the other.
 ~~~~~ By Faith *Abel* offered unto God a more excellent Sacrifice than *Cain*, by which  
 he obtained Witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his Gifts: and by it,  
 he being dead yet speaketh: i. e. his Blood crying for Vengeance or Recompence  
 for the Loss of Life, to God, who had accepted his Gifts, and declared him  
 righteous, teaches us to believe, that notwithstanding he was unjustly slain, and  
 his wicked Brother survived, yet God will make a Difference between the inno-  
 cent Sufferer and the guilty Murderer. His Approbation or Disapprobation shall  
 not be in vain, though we do not presently see the Effects of them; which Do-  
 ctrine the Case of *Abel* does as it were preach to all future Generations.

THE third Instance of Faith here given, is a Belief of some Reward to be re-  
 ceived from the Hand of God in another Life, for our Obedience to him in this,  
 and our living according to his Will, by what Means soever it be manifested unto  
 us; as in the Case of *Enoch*, who, though he knew that righteous *Abel* was mur-  
 dered by his wicked Brother, notwithstanding God's testifying of his Works that  
 he approved them, yet was not tempted to think worse of Providence for all that,  
 nor discouraged from a religious Obedience; because he was fully persuaded, that  
 however it might succeed with him in this Life, yet God would certainly take  
 care of him, and make it up to him in the next. And according to this Faith so  
 it happened to him, in a most remarkable manner, sufficient to convince all that  
 knew it, of the Certainty of that Life which he believed: By Faith *Enoch* was  
 translated that he should not see Death, and was not found [any more upon Earth]  
 because God had translated him: For before his Translation he had this Testimony,  
 that he pleased God. And with respect to the two foregoing Instances, though  
 more particularly, as it should seem, to the latter of them, the Apostle adds the  
 Observation in the Text: But without Faith it is impossible to please God; i. e.  
 without believing the first Principles of Religion, it is impossible that any Man  
 should be capable of receiving such Testimony from God, as either *Enoch* or *Abel*  
 had done: For he that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a  
 Rewarder of them that diligently seek him: i. e. He that makes any religious Ad-  
 dresses to a supreme Being, or proposes to have any Intercourse with him, or  
 thinks that he stands in any relation to him, so as to be capable of receiving any  
 thing from him; must necessarily believe the Existence of such a Being, and that  
 he shall be the better for making such Application to him. But this he can have  
 no great Ground to hope for, unless he be persuaded that this supreme Being, or  
 God, takes care of human Affairs, and observes human Actions, and will, some  
 way or other, reward those that behave themselves well, either in this Life or an-  
 other; and if he plainly see, that good Men are not always rewarded in this  
 Life, he will from hence be induced to believe, that there is another Life after  
 this intended for them. And though he be not as yet perfectly acquainted with  
 the Manner how this shall be, yet he can safely trust to that Wisdom, and  
 Power, and Goodness, which he is persuaded belongs to him, who is the Maker  
 and Governor of all Things.

THAT the Belief of God's Existence is necessarily supposed in all those, who  
 willingly, and *ex animo*, shew any sort of Veneration or Respect towards such a  
 Being, is a Thing so self-evident, that no Man can ever seriously go about to deny  
 it. Even *Epicurus* himself, though he denied all Providence, yet was forced to  
 own some sort of Excellent and Happy Beings, whom he called Gods, that he  
 might have some Pretence for complying with the outward Expressions of Vene-  
 ration and Worship, used among those with whom he lived; though he founded  
 the Decency or Fitness of this Veneration, only upon the Excellency of the Na-

<sup>a</sup> Nec metuimus eos, quos intelligimus nec sibi fingere ullam molestiam, nec alteri querere; Et pie sancteque co-  
 limus Naturam excellentem atque præstantem, — says Velleius in behalf of the Epicurean Worship, in Tully de Nat.  
 Deor. lib. 1. cap. 20.



ture of Gods above Men, and not upon any Concern that they had, or could have for Mankind upon his Principle. Leng.  
SERM.  
III.

BUT they who go no farther than this, cannot, in any just Sense, be said to come unto God: they cannot, consistently with their *Hypothesis*, either ask any Thing of him, or expect any Thing from him, while they believe him not to be concerned for Mankind. And therefore *Tully* makes even *Cotta* the Academic (whose Province it was, not to own the same Certainty or Assurance in those Matters, which the other Sects of Philosophers did) yet plainly to condemn this Hypothesis, as the Ruin of all Piety and Religion: <sup>b</sup> "For why (says he) should the Gods be worshiped by Men, if they are so far from having any Care or Concern for them, that they continue in a State of perfect Inactivity? The Excellence of their Nature is vainly pretended as a Reason, why a wise Man should shew them Reverence; for what Excellence can there be in that Nature, which is entirely taken up in the Pleasure of Self-enjoyment, and neither does, nor has done, nor ever will do any thing else? What Piety can be due to that Being, from whom you can receive nothing? or how can any Regard at all be due to that which has no Merit in it? Piety (or Religion) is looked upon as Justice towards God; but what Right can there be, whereon to found Justice, if there be no manner of common Tie or Relation between God and Man?" And he farther argues, that *Epicurus*, by removing from his Notion of a Deity, all Favour and Good-will to Mankind, as Things arising from Weakness and Imperfection, had plainly rooted out the very Foundation of Religion, by destroying that, which is the peculiar Character of the best and most excellent Nature, viz. Goodness and Beneficence. And he judges with good Reason, that *Posidonius* was not mistaken in his Opinion of *Epicurus*, when he thought him to be at the bottom a real Atheist; though in Words he outwardly owned the Being of a God, to avoid the publick Odium: For otherwise he could not think him so weak, as really to believe Things so absurd and inconsistent of the Divine Nature. And therefore he concludes after this manner: <sup>d</sup> *If there could be any such God (as Epicurus imagined) without Kindness or Good-will towards Men, I would take my final Farewel of him: For why should I beg his Grace or Favour? For he cannot be kind or gracious to any, since, in the Opinion of you Epicureans, all Kindness and Good-will is founded in Weakness, and Want of Self-sufficiency.*

THIS then ought to be looked upon as agreeable to the common Reason of Mankind, that a Persuasion or Belief, not only of the Being of a God, but also of his universal Providence and Concern for Mankind; and consequently an Expectation, that he will some Way or other reward Men for their Obedience to his Will, is a necessary Foundation of Religion. This is the Sum of what is intended in the Words of the Text, *Without Faith it is impossible to please God: for he that cometh to God, must believe that He is, and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* And upon this Faith the Apostle grounds all the worthy Actions of those excellent Persons, who lived in the first Ages of the World; and whose Virtues were so eminent, as to be remembered with Honour to future Generations.

BUT because there are some who think Religion and Morality to be Things so distinct in Nature, that they may be separated in Fact; and therefore though they allow that no Man can be a Religious Man, without believing some religious Prin-

<sup>b</sup> Quid est enim cur Deos ab hominibus colendos dicas? cum Dii non modò homines non colant, sed omnino nihil curent, nihil agant. Ast est eorum eximia quædam præstantisque naturæ; ut ea debeat ipsa per se ad colendum elicere sapientem. An quicquam eximium potest esse in eâ naturâ, quæ suâ voluptate lætans, nihil nec actura sit unquam, neque agat, neque egerit? Quæ porro pietas ei debetur, à quo nihil acceperis? Aut quid omnino, cujus nullum meritum sit, ei deberi potest? Est enim pietas Justitia adversum Deos; cum quibus quid potest nobis esse juris, cum homini nulla cum Deo communitas? *De Nat. Deor.* lib. 1. cap. 41.

<sup>c</sup> Epicurus verò ex animis hominum extraxit radicem religionem, cum Diis immortalibus & gratiam & opem sustulit. Cum enim optimam & præstantissimam naturam Dei dicat esse, negat idem esse in Deo gratiam, tollit id quod maximè proprium est optimæ præstantissimæque naturæ. Quid enim melius, aut quid præstantius bonitate & beneficentia. *Ibid.* cap. 43.

<sup>d</sup> Si maximè talis est Deus, ut nullâ gratiâ, nullâ hominum caritate teneatur, valeat. Quid enim dicam, propitius sit? Esse enim propitius potest nemini: quoniam, ut dicitis, omnis in imbecillitate est & gratia & caritas, *Ibid.* cap. 44. in fine.



*Leng.* ciple (besides the mere not denying the Existence of a God) yet as to all human  
 S E R M. Duties, arising from them as Men, wherein they think the Sum of all Morality  
 III. consists, they would persuade us, that they may be well enough preserved and se-  
 cured without any such Belief; and consequently that no Moral Principle can ob-  
 lige a Man to the Belief of a God and Providence. It may be Matter of Specu-  
 lation or Curiosity, in which a thinking Man may employ himself if he pleases;  
 as he may in the Consideration of the Motion or Quiescence of the Earth, or some  
*Phænomena* in the heavenly Bodies yet more remote from him. But as to the  
 Virtue or Necessity of believing any invisible Principle, they pretend to see none.  
 I design therefore in my Discourses upon this Subject, to set some of the Argu-  
 ments for the Being of a God, and Providence, &c. in such a Light as may not only  
 shew the Truth and Certainty of the Thing, but our Natural Obligation likewise  
 to the Belief of it, as we are Reasonable Creatures: By which it will appear, that  
 we cannot perform all those Duties, which are incumbent on us as we are Men,  
 without respect had to something above or beyond our own Nature; and conse-  
 quently that Atheism and Infidelity are inconsistent with any sure and lasting mo-  
 ral Principles, which can universally affect Mankind. And the Method I design  
 to take shall be this:

I. I shall endeavour to shew that, according to the general Sentiments of Man-  
 kind, there cannot be any perfect Morality expected where there is no Belief of  
 the first Principles of Religion.

II. T H A T therefore all Societies of Men, that have ever subsisted in any Order  
 in the World, have always professed the Belief of God's Existence, and at least of  
 some kind of Providence, and some Expectation of divine Rewards and Punish-  
 ments.

III. T H A T this Belief or universal Consent did not arise from any Art, or  
 Contrivance, or Compact of Men, in order to keep one another in awe; but was  
 really antecedent to it, and built upon a more universal Principle.

IV. T H I S will lead me to consider, upon what Foundation this general Belief  
 or Persuasion is built. [*Of this see Sermon VI.*]

I. I S H A L L endeavour to shew, that according to the general Sentiments of  
 Mankind, there cannot be any perfect Morality expected, where there is no Belief  
 of the first Principles of Religion.

W H E N *Abimelech*, the King of *Gerar*, expostulated with *Abraham* for con-  
 cealing from him that *Sarah* was his Wife, whereby he was in danger of being  
 brought into a Snare, and doing what would by no means have been agreeable to  
 the Rules of Hospitality, and asked him, *What sawest thou, that thou hast done  
 this Thing?* *Abraham* gives him this Reason for it: *Because I thought surely,  
 the Fear of God is not in this Place, and they will slay me for my Wife's sake.*  
 Being newly come a Stranger into the Country, and not knowing what Sense of  
 a Deity prevailed among them, he knew not what sort of Treatment he might  
 expect. For he reasoned with himself, that if there was no Awe of Religion  
 among them, there could be no sufficient Restraint from doing any Act of In-  
 justice or Cruelty, where it would tend to a present Gratification of their Appe-  
 tites, or Passions; unless there were some superior outward Force to deter them  
 from it, which he was sensible he wanted. And in this Way of Reasoning *Abra-  
 ham* was by no means singular. Even *Abimelech* himself seems to have been sa-  
 tisfied with the Conclusion, if the Premises had been true as *Abraham* suspected.  
 For indeed the generality of Mankind have ever reasoned after the same manner  
 in this Case: And therefore *Tully*, when he argues, that those who deny the Pro-  
 vidence of God and his Concern for Mankind, do necessarily destroy all the

<sup>c</sup> Gen. xx. 10, 11.



Grounds of Religion ; adds also, <sup>f</sup> that *if the Sense of Piety and Religion be taken away, the greatest Disturbance and Confusion in human Life would necessarily follow.* And though he is seldom given to be very positive, yet he plainly intimates his Opinion, <sup>g</sup> that *if Piety towards God was removed, there would be an End of all Fidelity, and of the Bonds of all human Society, and even of Justice itself, the Sum of all Virtues.* And in this he speaks his own Sense of the Matter, and not merely that of any particular Sect of Philosophers. And accordingly in Fact it has always been found, that in those Places, where there has been little Sense of God and Religion, or where the Notions of Religion have been greatly debased and corrupted, so as to have little Effect upon the Minds of Men in their moral Conduct, there the Manners of Men have been always most brutish and inhuman. And on the contrary, where Men have had the justest and most lively Sense of a Deity and a Providence, there all moral Virtues between Man and Man have flourished, the most worthy and generous Actions have been performed, and the Manners of Men been ever most human and civilized. I own indeed, that Mens Notions of Religion itself may be so much depraved and perverted by the Craft of some, and the Weakness of others, as to become the Occasion of much Mischief. And Superstition may so far prevail over some, as even to overwhelm the common Principles of Morality in divers Instances. And on the other hand, there may possibly be found, now and then, a particular Man of so singularly good a natural Disposition, as to behave himself with Decency in all the common Offices of human Life, without any previous reflecting upon the Obligations of Religion, and whose Practice is therefore better than his Principles. But now, as it would, in the first Case, be very unreasonable to charge those Evils upon Religion, which are occasioned purely by the Corruption of it, and which, if it were truly and sincerely practised, it would entirely prevent ; so in the second Case, to form a general Argument of the Uselessness or Uncertainty of Religious Principles, from some single Instances, which happen but very rarely, would be equally absurd and unreasonable. For what if a Man now and then be found better than his Principles ? Is this any Commendation of those Principles, which, if pursued, would make him much worse than Nature has made him ? We are not to seek for Truth in the uncertain and variable Practices of Men, but in plain and necessary Deductions from the Nature of Things, and such as the Generality of Men using their Reason, when they are under no Prejudice, will naturally make. And in like manner, we can by no means conclude, that the Principles of Atheism are either capable of producing, or even consistent with a perfect Morality, only because it may happen, that a Man, who by chance embraces them, may possibly be sober and temperate, and may exercise the outward Acts of Justice or Beneficence, Gratitude or Friendship in some particular Instances.

THE Question then is not, Whether a particular thoughtful Man may not see the natural Fitness and Propriety of a great many moral Actions, and accordingly practise them, abstractedly from all other Considerations, and without reflecting upon any future Consequences, as the Reward or Punishment of them ; nor, Whether some Men may not hold inconsistent Principles, which, if duly attended to, in their Consequences would naturally destroy one another : But the Question is, Whether, if the Minds of Men were not generally influenced by the Apprehension of something distinct from this Principle of mere Fitness and Congruity of Actions to the Nature of Things ; that is, of some Being, upon whom the Existence of Things themselves, and consequently their Natures and the Congruity of one to another, depends, not by Chance but wise Design, it could ever be possible for the Generality of Mankind to have any such firm Notions of Moral Good and Evil, as to keep awake what we call Natural Conscience in them, and fill them with Hopes or Fears according to

<sup>f</sup> — Quibus sublati, perturbatio vitæ sequitur & magna confusio.

<sup>g</sup> — Atque haud scio, an, pietate adversus Deos sublatâ, fides etiam & societas humani generis, & unâ excellentissima virtus justitia tollatur. Lib. 1. de Nat. Deor. in Proœmio.



*Leng.* the Tenor of their Actions. My Meaning is, that, without the Belief of a Supreme Intelligent Being, upon whom the Nature of Things depends, and who has a Power of exacting from all free Agents a Conformity of their Actions to that Law of Nature which he has established, and who will some way or other take Cognizance of them; such a Law, supposed to arise merely from the Fitness of Things, would have but very little Influence: It would be as ineffectual to the greatest Part of Mankind, as a human Law without any Sanction annexed, or the Apprehension of any Magistrate to put it in execution. It is possible that some Men may have that Benevolence to Society, and that generous Sense of publick Good, as to be a Law unto themselves, and of their own accord may do what the best human Law would direct them to. But what is this to the Bulk of Mankind? And even this cannot be expected, where the Notions of a Deity are excluded. We are to take human Nature as it generally is, and to consider what sort of Belief or Persuasion has the greatest and most universal Influence over it. And if we do this, we shall find, that Infidelity in the first Principles of Religion is utterly inconsistent with a perfect Morality, and that upon these two accounts:

1. BECAUSE, if there be no Belief of a God and a Providence, nor any Expectation of future Rewards and Punishments from any invisible Being, there cannot, in the common Sense of Mankind, be any sufficient Bond of Morality between Man and Man.

2. BECAUSE, if there be really a God that has any Concern with us, or for us, a compleat Morality must necessarily have respect to him, as well as to our Intercourse with one another.

1. BECAUSE, if there be no Belief of a God and a Providence, nor any Expectation of future Rewards and Punishments from any invisible Being, there cannot, in the common Sense of Mankind, be any sufficient Bond of Morality between Man and Man.

IF indeed the Actions of Men were directed only by Sense or Instinct, as the Actions of Brutes are, and had no Dependence upon any invisible Principle in the Mind; Morality would then be nothing else but living according to that natural Instinct, nor would any kind of Faith or Belief be necessary to such Actions. But this is not the Morality of Men endued with Understanding and Freedom of Will; nor is it what gives them such a Conscience of their own Actions, as to raise any Satisfaction or Displeasure with themselves for what they have done, after the Actions are over. For that is a Thing of a much higher Nature, which requires Reason, and Reflection, and some Application of Mind, both to Things past and future, as well as present; and consequently must suppose a Belief of something invisible, upon which we are moved to Action in a human or reasonable Way; and a comparing of our Actions with some antecedent Rule or Law, for the Transgression of which we inwardly judge ourselves accountable to some superior Being, who is some way or other as conscious of what we do, as we ourselves are. And to this purpose let it be observed,

1. THAT all human Actions, which are not merely animal, depend upon a Belief or Persuasion of something future or invisible, which gives the first Motion to them: That is, Men never designedly undertake any Thing considerable, but they expect either to acquire something good and useful from it, or to avoid something evil, which would otherwise ensue. Thus Men plant and sow upon a Belief of future Fruit; they work, and trade to remote Countries which they have never seen, not only upon a Belief, that there are such Countries, but also that they shall receive some Advantage by their Pains and Hazard: All which Things are future, and none of them capable of a strict Demonstration. And though this Consideration may seem not to have any great Relation to the Belief of a Providence; yet, if we take the Matter right, we cannot but observe, that even these Probabilities of the future Consequences of human Actions, by which Men are excited to perform this or that, have more or less Weight with them, as Men are more or less persuaded of an over-ruling Power that keeps the World in a constant



stant Order : For the more Chance rules, the less can any Prospect of the Future be depended on ; and the more uncertain the Prospect, the less is the Inducement to act upon it. But, Leng.  
S E R M.  
III.

2. MORAL Actions do depend still more upon the Acknowledgment of Principles, remote from Sense, and superior to Chance : And our Obligation in Conscience to the steady Performance of such Actions, must be founded upon the Belief of an Intelligent Legislator, who is also an Inspector of our Behaviour. For let Virtue be defined after what manner you please ; let it be *the Love of Order*, Harmony or Proportion of Mind ; let it be a living agreeably to the Perfection of Nature, or acting for the Good of the whole human Species, of which we are but a Part : Call it by what fine Names soever (which perhaps are less intelligible than the Thing itself without such defining) yet still the Question returns, Who constituted this Order of Things ? Who first made this Harmony or Proportion ? or, Who is the Author of this Nature ? For he must be the ultimate Legislator ; and this Law of Nature, this Rule of Morality, must be his Will, though not arbitrary and mutable, but directed by his supreme Reason ; whether it be made known to us by the Observation of that natural Order of Things which he has established, and from whence, by reasoning, we gather the Fitness and Decency of every moral Action ; or whether it be discovered to us by any more immediate Direction or Revelation from himself. And if there be not an Opinion or Persuasion, that this Supreme Being is a Witness of human Life, and conscious of what we do, even in our most secret Recesses ; it is hard to conceive how our own Consciences should be affected with Shame and Regret, though Men applaud us, when we do ill ; or with Pleasure and Satisfaction, though we incur the Censure of a mistaken World, when we do well. These Effects of Conscience suppose in us a Belief of the intimate and constant Presence of one, whose Favour or Displeasure is more to be regarded than any outward Consideration whatever. From whence it will follow, that whatever Opinion sets Men loose from the Restraint of their own Consciences, will make their Justice, Fidelity, Gratitude, and all other moral Virtues, respecting their fellow Creatures, very precarious ; and therefore an avowed Infidelity in the first Principles of Religion, must needs be very destructive of that Morality, which regards our Intercourse with one another.

AN Author not suspected of Partiality in the Case, has freely owned this Truth, when he tells us, that <sup>h</sup> “ Where the Theistical Belief is entire and perfect, there “ must be a steady Opinion of the Superintendency of a Supreme Being, a Wit- “ ness and Spectator of human Life, and conscious of all that is felt or acted in “ the Universe ; so that in the perfectest Recess, or deepest Solitude, there must “ be *One* still presumed remaining with us, whose Presence singly must be of more “ Moment, than that of the most august Assembly on Earth. In such a Presence “ as this, ’tis impossible, but as the Shame of guilty Actions must be the greatest “ of any, so must the Honour be of Well-doing, even under the unjust Cen- “ sure of a World. And in this Case, ’tis very apparent how far conducting a “ perfect Theism must be to Virtue, and how great Deficiency there is in “ Atheism.”

AND that this is agreeable to the natural and common Sentiments of Mankind, is plain from hence, that in all Ages and Nations of the World, an Oath, or Appeal to the Deity, has been looked upon as the strongest Security, both of Veracity in asserting, and Fidelity in promising, that one Man could freely give another. Now this Custom of demanding or offering an Oath, could never have obtained, without an antecedent Opinion deeply rooted in the Minds of Men,

<sup>s</sup> Hanc igitur video sapientissimorum fuisse sententiam, legem neque hominum ingeniis excogitatam, neque scitum aliquod esse populorum, sed æternum quiddam, quod universum mundum regeret, imperandi prohibendique sapientia. Ita principem legem illam & ultimam, mentem esse dicebant omnia ratione aut cogentis aut vetantis Dei. Cic. de Legg. lib. 2. And again, — Lex vera atque princeps apta ad jubendum & ad vetandum, ratio est recta summi Jovis. Ibid.

<sup>h</sup> Enquiry concerning Virtue, pag. 57



*Leng.* That the Belief of a Deity, and the Sense of his being a Witness and Judge of  
 S E R M. our Actions, was one of the strongest Engagements to act justly and honestly by  
 III. one another. Nay, farther, The very Abuse of this Principle by wicked Men,  
 and the making hypocritical Pretences to Religion, or offering an Oath for Confirmation, in order to deceive others the more securely, is an evident Proof of Mens natural Opinion, that the strongest Obligation to human Virtue, or moral Honesty, is founded in a sincere Belief of the first Principles of Religion. And that this Opinion is not adventitious, or contrived by cunning Men, and so instilled into others, to keep them in awe; I shall have a proper Occasion to observe more at large hereafter.

'Tis a fatal Thing, both to Religion and Morality, to distinguish so far between them, as to imagine that either of them can be perfect without the other. For as we have all the Reason in the World to suspect the Sincerity of that Man's Professions of Religion, who is willingly deficient in moral Honesty; so he that openly declares himself to be under no Restraint of Conscience from the Belief of any invisible Principle, must excuse us, if we doubt, whether his Integrity may in all Cases be safely depended on. He that believes the Principles of Religion, has all the other Engagements to Virtue that an Infidel can pretend to, and also that which is looked upon as more binding than all the rest, over and above: And what Reason then can I have to be secure of his Virtue or Morality, who owns himself to be under fewer Obligations to practise it, than other Men? Upon these Considerations therefore, if Morality were limited to our Behaviour towards Men only, even that could not be sufficiently secured upon the Principles of Atheism. But those Principles will be farther deficient likewise upon another account; and that is,

2. BECAUSE, if there really be a God that has any Concern with us, or for us, a compleat Morality must necessarily have respect to him, as well as to our Intercourse with one another. This is what cannot reasonably be denied, unless there should be any who think, because God is a Spirit, and invisible, that therefore Men, who are clothed with Body, have no Means of shewing him any Honour or Reverence, or of acting or doing any thing that can have Relation to such a super-eminent Being. But if there be any such Persons, they have a very mean Opinion of a human Mind, and a very odd Notion of the Morality of human Actions, which depends upon the internal Dispositions of the Mind, of which outward Actions are only an external Sign, and that not always certain or infallible. But if we are capable of knowing or believing any thing of God, as a supreme Mind governing the World, we are also capable of inwardly owning this, and consequently of giving him an inward Adoration and Worship in our own Minds. We may exercise Affections of Faith, or Trust, and Affiance in him; of Love, and Reverence, and Obedience towards him. These are natural inward Acts of Piety and Religion, due to an infinitely powerful, wise, and beneficent Being, who has given us Understanding, and Will, and Powers of acting: In which communicable Attributes an human Mind is related to the Divine Being. If therefore, Morality cannot be compleat and perfect, without acting suitably and becomingly to every Relation, in which we stand to any Beings, and especially rational Beings, that are known to us; the very chief Part of it must be in proper Acts of Piety and Religion to the first Being, from whom we derive our Reason itself. Upon this account *Tully*, in stating the Law of Nature, which is the Rule of moral Actions, and from whence all other Laws ought to be deduced, justly lays the Foundation of it in that original Relation or Society, which is between God and Man.

<sup>i</sup> Est igitur, quoniam nihil est ratione melius, eaque & in homine & in Deo, prima homini cum Deo rationis societas, &c. *De Legg.* lib. 1.

Jam verò virtus eadem in homine ac Deo est, neque ullo alio ingenio præterea. Est autem virtus nihil aliud, quam in se perfecta & ad summum perducta natura. Est igitur homini cum Deo similitudo. Quod cum ita sit, quæ tandem potest esse proprior certiorve cognatio? *Ibid.*



<sup>k</sup> AND he makes the Acknowledgement of a God, and a Providence over human Affairs, and the different Regards which that Providence has to the good or evil Actions of Men, to be the first Principles, which every Member of Society ought to be fully persuaded of; as may be seen at large, in his Books *De Legibus*. Leng. SERM. III.

AND in this he agrees, not only with *Plato*, and with other Wise Men that had gone before him, in writing upon this Subject, but with the common Sentiments of Mankind, expressed in the general Practice of all civilized Nations. I need not be particular in insisting upon this, which may in some measure appear from what has already been suggested, in this Discourse; and which will farther appear, from the Consideration of what I shall offer under the next Head; wherein I am to shew,

II. THAT all Societies of Men, that have ever subsisted in any tolerable Order in the World, have professed the Belief of God's Existence, and at least of some kind of Providence, and an Expectation of Divine Rewards and Punishments.

OF which I design to speak, with God's Assistance, the next Opportunity.

<sup>k</sup> Sit igitur hoc jam à principio persuasum civibus dominos esse omnium rerum ac moderatores Deos, eaque quæ gerantur eorum geri judicio ac numine, eosdemque optimè de genere hominum mereri, & qualis quisque sit, quid agat, quid in se admittat, quâ mente, quâ pietate religiones colat, intueri, piorumque & impiorum habere rationem: his enim rebus imbutæ mentes haud sane abhorrebunt ab utili, & à verâ sententiâ. *De Legg. lib. 2.*



## S E R M O N IV.

Preached *April* the 1<sup>st</sup>, 1717.

H E B. xi. 6.

*But without Faith it is impossible to please God: for he that cometh to God, must believe that He is, and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

Leng.  
S E R M.  
IV.

THE Sum of what is primarily intended in these Words, as I observed in my last Discourse, is this, That a Persuasion, or Belief, not only of the Being of a God, but also of his universal Providence and Concern for Mankind, and consequently, an Expectation that he will some way or other reward Men for their Obedience to his Will, is a necessary Foundation of Religion. And upon this Faith, or Belief, the Apostle grounds all the great and worthy Actions of those excellent Persons mentioned in this Chapter, who lived in the first Ages of the World, divers of them before any general written Revelation of the Will of God to Mankind, whose Piety and Virtue were remembered with Honour to future Generations, and thought fit to be recorded, as Examples to others, in those Writings which God designed as a lasting Instruction to all those unto whom he vouchsafed to reveal his Will in that manner. Now though it will hardly be denied, that these first Principles of Religion are absolutely necessary to all voluntary Acts of Religious Worship, strictly so called; that is, to Invocation and Adoration of the Deity, and to all Hope and Expectation of any Benefit from such Worship of him; yet, because there are some who think, or pretend at least, that Religion and Morality are Things so distinct in themselves, that they may be separated from each other in Practice, and that human Virtue may subsist apart and entire without Piety towards God, therefore, in speaking to this Subject, I proposed to shew, that we cannot perform all those Duties which are incumbent on us, as we are Men, without respect had to something above or beyond our own Nature; that is, some superior Being establishing such an Order and Connection of Things, from whence the Law of Nature, which obliges Mankind to such and such Actions, does result; and consequently that Atheism, or Infidelity of the first Principles of Religion, is inconsistent with any sure and lasting moral Principles, that can universally affect or oblige Mankind. And in order to this, I designed to pursue this Method:

I. To shew, That according to the general Sentiments of Mankind, there cannot be any perfect Morality expected, where there is no Belief of the first Principles of Religion.

II. THAT therefore all Societies of Men, that have ever subsisted in the World, in any tolerable Order, have always professed the Belief of God's Existence, and at least of some kind of Providence, and an Expectation of divine Rewards and Punishments.

III. THAT



III. THAT this Belief, or universal Consent, did not arise from any Art, or Contrivance, or Compact of Men, in order to keep one another in Awe; but was really antecedent to it, and built upon a more universal Principle.

Long.  
SERM.  
IV.

THE first of these I have already spoken to, and shewn the general Sense of Mankind about it, in my last Discourse; which will farther appear by considering what I am now to speak to, *viz.*

II. THAT all Societies of Men, which have ever subsisted in the World in any tolerable Order, have always professed a Belief of God's Existence, and at least of some kind of Providence, and an Expectation of divine Rewards and Punishments.

I EXPRESS this Matter in these general Terms at present, because I would avoid any needless Cavils, that might be raised against some Parts of that Evidence which I shall bring for the Proof of it, if I were to express it in Terms implying an absolute and particular Providence, or such perfect Rewards and Punishments in another Life as is generally understood among Christians. For it is sufficient to my present Purpose, to shew a general Agreement of Mankind, in the Belief of that which is the Foundation of Religion; though both their Notions, as to the Nature of God and the Extent of his Providence, and their Practices as to Religious Worship, and their Opinions about a future State were exceeding different, and, when compared, even inconsistent with one another. And I mention Societies of Men subsisting in some tolerable Order, because it cannot be denied, that there have, in divers Ages and divers Countries, been particular Men that have professed their Disbelief of God's Existence, others that have been doubtful about it, besides those that have been suspected; though they have never been so many as to form any regular Society, nor had they any common Principles, upon which they could well unite into Society. This being premised, I shall now proceed to shew,

THE Universality of this Persuasion, or Belief of the Being of God and some sort of future State. And I join these two together, not that we are to look for the same explicate Acknowledgement of the latter as of the former every where, there being not the same Occasion always to make it appear in the outward Practice of Religion, or the open Profession of it, and it requires somewhat a longer Deduction of Reasoning to prove it; but because the two have a near Affinity to one another, and may, I hope, be both proved to have an Original Foundation in Nature, and to be Parts of the natural Creed of Mankind. Now to shew this Universality, I shall

1. PRODUCE the Testimony of some Authors of the best Credit; and then,
2. SHEW how agreeable this is to what we find to have been practised in all considerable Nations of which we have any History.

1. I AM to produce the Testimony of some Authors of the best Credit, and such who have not rashly and by Chance, but upon the most mature Consideration, asserted it. And I shall begin with *Tully*; because he, having written several Treatises upon the Subject, had Occasion to enquire very carefully into the Matter. And we find by his Books, that he had very diligently examined all the Opinions, that were of any Note, of those that went before him, both as to the Nature of God, and the Nature of the human Soul. And though he is not usually very positive in delivering his own Opinion (as professing himself of the *Academic* Sect) yet, in the Points now before us, he has done it very clearly. As to the common Consent of Mankind, he has asserted it in many Places; both where he speaks his own Sense in his own Person, and where he introduces different Sects of Philosophers speaking their Sense: So that we may conclude it to have been a Point generally allowed in all former Times down to his own Age. Where he speaks in his own Person, he tells us, *a* That of so many kinds of Animals as are in the

*a* Itaque ex tot generibus nullum est animal præter hominem quod habeat notitiam aliquam Dei; de ipsisque hominibus nulla gens est, neque tam immanis, neque tam fera, quæ non, etiamsi ignoret qualem habere Deum doceat, tamen habendum sciat. *De Legg. lib. 1. cap. 18.*

World,



Leng. *World, there is none except Man that has any Knowledge of God; but of Mankind*  
 SERM. *there is no Nation, either so barbarous or savage, but that they know they ought to*  
 VI. *have some God, though they know not what kind of God is most proper to be owned.*  
 Again, <sup>b</sup> *This is looked upon, says he, as a very strong Argument for our Belief of*  
*the Existence of Gods, that there is no Nation so wild, no Man of so strange a*  
*Make, as not to have his Mind tinged with some Belief of the Gods. Many*  
*have perverse and odd Opinions of them, for this is wont to happen from vicious*  
*Custom; but yet all do think that there is some Divine Power and Nature. And*  
*it is to be observed, that he is in that Discourse treating of the future Existence of*  
*the Soul of Man, which he puts likewise upon the same foot of general Belief,*  
*and therefore calls natural.* <sup>c</sup> *I can, says he, bring very good Authorities for this*  
*Opinion (of a future State) and such as ought in all Cases, and are generally wont*  
*to weigh very much: And the first is, the Sense of all Antiquity; which, the nearer*  
*it was to the Beginning of Things and to the first Divine Offspring, might proba-*  
*bly have the better Means of seeing what was true. One Thing then which was*  
*perfectly inbred in these ancient People, was, that there was some Sense after*  
*Death, and that Man was not utterly extinguished by departing out of this Life.*  
 And again, in the same Book he tells us, <sup>d</sup> *As we do by Nature believe there are*  
*Gods, but by Reason know what kind of Beings they are; so we are persuaded, that*  
*Souls continue after Death, from the general Consent of all Nations: but what*  
*Place they abide in, and what their Nature is, we must learn from Reason.*

I AM not yet strictly considering what was Tully's own Opinion, either of the Nature of the Soul, or the Being of God; but, from what I have cited out of him, I think it evidently appears, that he was fully persuaded, that both the Being of God and a future State were generally believed in the most ancient Times, and among all Sorts of People.

IN his Book *De Naturâ Deorum*, the same Thing is asserted by the several Sects of Philosophers, in whose Name he speaks. Under the Person of *Balbus* the *Stoic*, it is made a strong Argument for the Certainty of a Divine Being, <sup>e</sup> *Because, if Men had not a clear and evident Perception of the Truth of it in their Minds, the Belief of it would not have continued so constant, nor have been confirmed by Length of Time, and gained such Ground throughout all Ages and Generations of Men.* And he again concludes, <sup>f</sup> *That this is the constant Opinion of all Men in all Nations: For the Sense of God's Existence, is as it were innate or engraven upon the Minds of all Men.*

As for the *Epicureans*, it is plain, it would have been most consistent with their Hypothesis of no Providence or future State, if they could also have had any Colour for entirely denying the Being of any God; and yet it seems they were sensible, that the Belief of it was so universal, that they would not offer to contradict it, but roundly fall in with it, and <sup>g</sup> magnify *Epicurus* for being the first that

<sup>b</sup> Ut porro firmissimum hoc afferri videtur cur Deos esse credamus, quod nulla gens tam fera, nemo omnium tam fit immanis, cujus mentem non imbuerit Deorum opinio: multi de Diis prava sentiunt, id enim vitioso more effici solet; omnes tamen esse vim & naturam divinam arbitrantur. *Tusc. Disp.* lib. 1. cap. 13.

<sup>c</sup> Auctoribus quidem ad istam sententiam (quam vis obtineri) uti optimis possumus; quod in omnibus causis & debet & solet valere plurimum: Et primum quidem omni antiquitate; quæ quo propius aberat ab ortu & divinâ progenie, hoc melius ea fortasse quæ erant vera cernebat: Itaque unum illud erat insitum prisca illis, quos cæcos appellat *Ennius*, esse in morte sensum, neque excessu vitæ sic deleri hominem, ut funditus interiret, &c. *Tusc. Disp.* lib. 1. cap. 12.

<sup>d</sup> Sed ut Deos esse naturâ opinamur, qualesque sint ratione cognoscimus; sic permanere animos arbitramur consensu nationum omnium: Quâ in sede maneat, qualesque sint, ratione discendum est. *Ibid.* cap. 16.

<sup>e</sup> — Quod nisi cognitum comprehensumque animis haberemus, non tam stabilis opinio permaneret, nec confirmaretur diuturnitate temporis, nec unâ cum seculis ætatibusque hominum inveterare potuisset. *De Nat. Deorum*, lib. 2. cap. 7.

<sup>f</sup> Itaque inter omnes omnium gentium sententia constat; omnibus enim innatum est, & in animo quasi insculptum, esse Deos. *Ibid.*

<sup>g</sup> Ea qui consideret, quàm inconsultè & temerè dicantur venerari Epicurum, & in eorum ipsorum numero de quibus hæc quæstio est habere debeat; solus enim vidit primum esse Deos, quod in omnium animis eorum notionem impressisset ipsa natura: Quæ est enim gens, aut quod genus hominum, quod non habeat sine doctrinâ anticipationem quandam Deorum? Quam appellat *πρόληψις* Epicurus, id est, anteceptam animo rei quandam informationem, sine quâ nec intelligi quicquam, nec quæri, nec disputari possit. — Cùm enim non instituto aliquo, aut more, aut lege sit opinio constituta, maneatque ad unum omnium firma consensio; intelligi necesse est esse Deos, quoniam insitas eorum vel potiùs innatas cognitiones habemus: De quo autem omnium natura consentit, id verum esse necesse est: Esse igitur Deos consistendum est. *De Nat. Deor.* lib. 1.



from thence took the hint to make a natural Impression or *Idea* the Foundation of it: For so *Tully*, under the Person of *Velleius*, represents their Opinion; For what Nation is there, or what Race of Men, that have not, without any Teaching, some Anticipation of Gods in their Mind? which *Epicurus* calls *πρόληψις*, that is, an antecedent Information of the Thing in the Mind, without which nothing can be understood, or enquired, or discoursed upon. — For since this Opinion is not founded upon any Institution, or Custom, or Law, and yet every single Man firmly agrees in it, it must necessarily be understood, that there are Gods, because we have an implanted, or rather innate Knowledge of them: Now what the Nature of all Men agrees in must be true, therefore we must own that there are Gods. This is his Way of arguing.

Now what does *Cotta* the *Academic*, who was to say the most he could against every Man's Opinion, reply to all this? Why truly, as much as the Case will bear, and as much, in Effect, as has been said upon the Subject ever since. For first, he allows the Being of God, but is not satisfied with the *Epicurean* Manner of proving it; then he thinks the Argument itself of Universality, in the manner that *Velleius* proposed it, is not true. For he supposes, <sup>h</sup> that there may be divers Nations (but he offers to name none of them) so very brutish and void of all Humanity, as not to have any Notion or Suspicion of the Being of a God. Then he mentions particular Persons, as Exceptions to this general Opinion, such as *Diagoras*, commonly called the *Atheist*, and *Theodorus*, and the famous Sophist *Protagoras*, who was banished out of the Territories of *Athens*, and had his Books burnt for writing in the beginning of one of them, that he was not able to say, whether there were any Gods or no. And from this Usage he supposes, <sup>i</sup> that others of the same Sentiments might be made more shy of declaring their Opinions openly, since they saw that only the doubting of it could not escape unpunished. And farther he imagines, that all sacrilegious, impious and perjured Persons do really not believe any God at all.

THIS is the Sum of what he alledges against the Universality of the Belief of God's Existence: and though it may have some Force in it against the Notion of the *Epicureans*, who laid the whole Proof, for the Being of a God, upon that natural Anticipation or innate *Idea* of him, which they supposed every single Man had, and not upon any Consideration of the visible Effects of Providence, or any original Tradition from the first Parents of Mankind; yet, as to what concerns the common Notion of universal Consent, as it was maintained by others, it is no Argument against it. For what if now and then a Man, affecting Singularity and despising all common Opinions, shall argue against the Existence of God? Or, what if some Clans of monstrously brutish People, that are sunk below the rest of the human Species, and have very little, besides an human Shape, even in other respects, which can evidence their having common human Reason, should not discover any Sign of Religion among them? Is this a sufficient Exception to the Generality of Mankind using their Reason alike in other Matters? Do we not allow, that Mankind generally take themselves to be Creatures naturally made for Society, though there be some that avoid all human Conversation in Fact, or some that out of an Itch of maintaining something contrary to the rest of the World, will needs affirm, that the natural State of Man is a State of War? And therefore *Cotta*, as much an *Academic* as he pretended to be, does in Effect give up this Point, and tells us, <sup>k</sup> That as far as the other Sects of Philosophers agreed in it, he would not meddle with the Argument, since almost every one, and himself, in particular, owned the Being of Gods.

I HAVE been the more particular in taking notice of the Accounts which we have in the Writings of *Tully* as to this Matter, for a Reason which I shall have occasion to mention by and by. And I shall therefore be more brief as to the

<sup>h</sup> — Equidem arbitror multas esse gentes, sic immanitate efferatas, ut apud eas nulla suspicio Deorum sit.

<sup>i</sup> Ex quo equidem existimo tardiores ad hanc sententiam profitendam multos esse factos, quippe cum poenam ne dubitatio quidem effugere potuisset.

<sup>k</sup> Quae communia sunt vobis cum ceteris philosophis non attingam, ut hoc ipsum: Placet enim omnibus fere, mihi quae imprimis, Deos esse.



*Leng.* rest who lived before him, who all speak of these Opinions, as what had generally prevailed before their own Age, Time out of Mind. And some give their Reasons, how it came to be so, which they would never have done, if they had not verily thought the Thing true in Fact. <sup>1</sup> *Plato*, for Instance, makes the general Consent of all Men, *Greeks* and *Barbarians*, in the Belief of a God, one Argument for the Certainty of the Thing: And both for this, and for the Soul's Immortality and Future Rewards and Punishments, which are Things he often treats of, he frequently hints at the general Opinion of former Ages. And that *Socrates*, his great Master, did use to argue from the same Topic, appears not only from *Plato's* Doctrine, which was principally derived from him, but also from that Discourse which *Xenophon* tells us, he himself heard from *Socrates's* own Mouth, in a Conversation with one *Aristodemus*, a Pretender to Infidelity at that Time; in which, among other excellent Arguments for a God and a Providence taking particular Care of Mankind, he has this remarkable Passage, <sup>m</sup> *Do you think*, says he, *the Gods would have made this Opinion, That they are able to reward and punish, so natural to Mankind, if they were not able to do it? Or that all Men could have been deceived for all Ages, and never yet have perceived it? Do you not observe, that the most ancient Cities and Nations among Mankind have ever been most religious, and the most prudent Ages shewn the greatest Regard to the Gods? Aristotle*, who is by some thought not to have been over favourable to Religion, tells us, <sup>n</sup> *That all Men have an Opinion of the Gods, and all Men assign the highest Place to the Divine Nature, both Barbarians and Greeks, whoever believe the Being of Gods.* And the Author of the Book *De Mundo*, (who is by some thought not to be *Aristotle*, yet certainly an Author of great Antiquity, even of the Age of *Aristotle* himself, if his dedicating the Book to *Alexander* can be any Proof of it,) affirms, <sup>o</sup> *That there is a very ancient Way of Reasoning or Discourse, and such as all Men receive from their Forefathers, That all Things are from God, and consist or are constituted by God, and that no Nature is of itself sufficient, if destitute of his Preservation.* It would be endless, and is by no means necessary, to produce all the Testimonies that might be had to this purpose out of *Greek* and *Latin* Writers, who all follow one another, especially those that lived in the Times after those which I have already mentioned. I shall only mention that remarkable one of *Maximus Tyrius*, in his Discourse of *What the Nature of God is according to Plato*. About the Nature of God, he tells us, Men were infinitely divided, and every Man speaks according to his own Apprehensions; <sup>p</sup> *But*, says he, *in so great Strife, Confusion, and Disagreement of Opinions, you may observe one Law, or Discourse, wherein all agree all the World over, viz. That there is one God, the King and Father of all; and many Gods, the Offspring of this God, and Partakers of his Government: This the Greek says, and this the Barbarian says, he that dwells upon the Continent, and he that lives by the Sea, both the Wise and the Unwise.* Thus much therefore for Testimony.

2. LET it be considered, how agreeable this is to what we find to have been practised in all considerable Nations, of which we have any good History: For the general Practice of a Nation, for a long time together, is the surest Indication of what is the prevailing Opinion upon which such Practice is founded. Now I believe we may challenge all the Histories in the World, of any Credit, to name any civilized People, where there was not always some Form or other of Religious Worship, some publick Place or other, either Temple, or Grove, or Mountain,

<sup>1</sup> *De Leg.* lib. 10. p. 886.

<sup>m</sup> Οἱ δ' ἂν τὰς Θεῶν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις δόξαν ἐμφύσαι, ὡς ἱκανοὶ εἰσιν οὗ καὶ κακῶς ποιεῖν, εἰ μὴ διωατοὶ ἦσαν ἢ ἀνθρώπων ἐξαπαλωμένων τ' πάντῃ χρόνον εἰδέναι ἂν αἰδέσθαι; ἢ ἔρεται ὅτι τὰ πολυχρονιώτα καὶ σοφώτατα τ' ἀνθρώπων, πόλεις ἔθνη Θεοσεβεία εἰσι, καὶ αἱ φρονιμώταται ἡλικίαι Θεῶν ἐπιμελέσθαι. *Xenoph.* ἀπομν. lib. 1. cap. 4.

<sup>n</sup> Πάντες γὰρ ἄνθρωποι πρὸς Θεῶν ἔχουσιν ὑπόληψιν, ἢ πάντες τ' ἀνωτάτω τῷ Θεῷ τὸν δαπάναν καὶ βάρβαροι ἢ Ἕλληνες, ὅσοι περ εἰς νομίζουσιν Θεούς. *De Caelo*, lib. 1. cap. 3.

<sup>o</sup> Ἀρχαῖοι μὲν ἦν τις λόγος καὶ πάτερός ἐστι πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις, ὡς ἐκ Θεῶν τὰ πάντα ἢ ἀπὸ Θεῶν ἡμῖν σωθήσκειν· εἰδεῖν δὲ φύσιν αὐτῆ κατ' ἐαυτὴν αὐτάρκους ἐξημωθεῖσα τ' ἐκ τῆς σωτηρίας. Cap. 6.

<sup>p</sup> Ἐν τοσούτῳ ᾧ πολέμῳ καὶ εἰσεὶ ἢ ἀφ' ὧν ἕνα ἴδους ἂν ἐν πάσῃ γῇ ὁμόφρονον νόμον καὶ λόγον, ὅτι Θεὸς εἷς πάντων βασιλεύς, καὶ πατήρ, ἢ Θεοὶ πολλοὶ Θεῶν παῖδες σωτήρες Θεῶν· ταῦτα καὶ ὁ Ἕλληρ λέγει ἢ ὁ βάρβαρος λέγει, καὶ ὁ ἡπειρώτης ἢ ὁ θαλάττης, καὶ ὁ σοφὸς ἢ ὁ ἄσοφος.



or Altar, used and appointed for the Performance of it. As to the particular *Leng.*  
 Kinds of Idolatry which prevailed in several Nations, there may perhaps be some *SERM.*  
 Account given how, and by whom, they were first introduced. But there is no *IV.*  
 Ground in the World to assert, that because there was a Time when such a particular Corruption of Religion first came in among a People, therefore there was also a Time when such a People had no Religion at all among them. A Man may as well assert, that, because there was a Time when Men had not found out the Way of sowing Corn, or cultivating Vines, for making of Bread and Wine; or because there may be yet some uncultivated Corners of the World, where it is not yet done; therefore there was also a Time when all Men generally did, and a Place where some Men now do live without eating or drinking. <sup>9</sup> *Orpheus* is supposed by some to have first brought Religion into *Greece* out of *Egypt*, whither he went to learn it. But had they then no Religion at all in *Greece* before his Time? Yes, certainly; though they had not that particular Kind of Idolatry, or those Rites and Ceremonies which he brought among them. What new Model he brought, or the Time when, is very uncertain: but what <sup>1</sup> *Plato* thinks is very probable, that the first Inhabitants of *Greece* did worship the Sun, Moon, Earth, Stars, and Heaven, as visible Deities, as many of the Barbarous Nations still did in his Time; and they called them *Θεοὶ* from *Θεῖν*, because of their swift Motion: And though this be somewhat different, yet, if we make Allowance for Time, it is not inconsistent with what <sup>1</sup> *Herodotus* tells us, That the ancient *Pelagians*, who were the first Inhabitants of *Greece* before the *Helens* came among them, sacrificed all kinds of Things, and made Prayers to the Gods; but that they had no particular Names or Surnames for their Gods, only they called them in general *Θεοὶ*, from *τιθημι* or *Θεῖναι*, because they put and kept every Thing, and every Country, in order: But that long after this, they learned out of *Egypt* the Names of other Gods. As to the general Belief of a future State, that prevailing Custom of deifying excellent Men after their Death, which obtained very early, and was very far spread in the World, is a convincing Proof of it, and is accordingly made use of by <sup>1</sup> *Tully*, and other good Authors, for that Purpose. There are indeed those, who call the Immortality of the Soul an Invention of the *Egyptians*, and make *Herodotus* their Voucher for it; and from thence would infer, that other Nations knew nothing of it, 'till Travellers brought it from thence.

Now if, indeed, the *Egyptians* had been so much older than all the rest of Mankind, as they pretended to be, then this Opinion might well have been first among them, because we suppose it to have been as old as Mankind; but otherwise they had it not before others, nor were the Inventers of it: Nor do the Words of *Herodotus* imply so much; for what he says is this: "*The Egyptians are the first that say the Soul of Man is immortal, but that after the Body is destroyed, it passes into another Animal; and that when it has gone through all Land and Sea Animals, and Fowls of the Air, then it enters into the Body of a Man again; and this Round of Migration is performed in three thousand Years: And there have been some Greeks, both formerly and of later Years, who have pretended to this Opinion, whose Names I know, but will not set down.*"

Now let the *Egyptians* have the Credit of this Invention of Transmigration, if they please, and let *Pythagoras* bring his Doctrine of it from thence into *Greece*; yet the Belief of a Future State was both in *Greece* and other Countries, long before his Time: For not only *Phercydes* professed this Opinion, whose Scholar *Pythagoras* was before he went into *Egypt*; but *Homer*, who lived some Ages

<sup>9</sup> *Diodorus Sic.* lib. 1.

<sup>1</sup> *In Cratyl.* p. 397.

<sup>1</sup> Ἔθνη δὲ καὶ πάντα πρῶτον οἱ Πελασγοὶ θεοῖσι ἐπονομάζοντο, ὡς ἐγὼ ἐν Δωδώνῃ εἶδα ἀκούσας, ἐπανυμῶν δὲ ἐπὶ ὄνομα ἐποιῶντο ἑδενὶ αὐτῶν ἢ γὰρ ἀκηκόεσάν κεν. Θεοὺς δὲ προσενομάσαν σφίσις δὲ τούτων ὅτι κόσμῳ θάλλει τὰ πάντα πρῶτα καὶ πάσαι νομαὶ εἶχον· ἔπειτα δὲ χρόνῳ πολλῷ διελθόντι ἐπύθοντο ἐκ τῆς Αἰγύπτου ἀπηλμένα τὰ ὀνόματα τῶν θεῶν ἄλλων. *Herod.* lib. 2. cap. 52.

<sup>1</sup> *Cic. Tusc. Disp.* 1.

<sup>1</sup> Πρῶτοι δὲ πάντες τὸν λόγον Αἰγύπτιοι εἰσι εἰπόντες, ὡς ἀνθρώπων ψυχὴ ἀθάνατός ἐστι, τὸ σῶμα δὲ κατὰ φύσιν, ἐς ἄλλο σῶμα αἰεὶ γινόμενον ἐσθύνει· ἔπειτα δὲ περιέλθῃ πάντα τὰ χερσαῖα καὶ τὰ θαλάσσια καὶ τὰ πτηνὰ, αὐτὴ ἐς ἀνθρώπου σῶμα γινόμενον ἐσθύνει· τὴν περιέλθουσαν δὲ αὐτὴ γίνεσθαι ἐν περὶ γῆρας ἔτεσι· τούτων τὸν λόγον εἰσὶ οἱ Ἕλληνας ἐχρήσαντο, οἱ μὲν πρῶτον, οἱ δὲ ὕστερον ὡς ἰδίῳ ἐκείνων ἰόντι· τὸ ἐγὼ εἶδὼς τὰ ὀνόματα ἢ γράφω. *Enterp.* cap. 131.

before



Leng. before him, supposes it to have been a well known Opinion in all Countries, or  
SERM. else he could not have grafted so many beautiful Fictions upon it as he has done.

IV. *Herodotus* also tells us, that the *Getæ*, the valiantest and honestest among the *Thracians*, believed the Soul's Immortality, and said, when they died they went to the God, or *Δαίμων*. *Zamolxis*<sup>w</sup>, (who is in some Copies called *Ζάλμοξις*, and whom some of the *Getæ* called *Γεζελέϊζιν*,) whom some *Greeks*, out of Vanity for their own Nation, would make to have been Servant to *Pythagoras*, and from him to have carried this Opinion among these *Thracians*: But this, *Herodotus* tells us, he did not believe, because he thought this *Zamolxis*, whoever he was, Man or Dæmon, lived long before the Time of *Pythagoras*.

THE *Greeks* were very vain, as well as the *Egyptians*, and so would fain pretend to the Honour of discovering every Thing that once came into Credit: But we can by no means allow it in these original Opinions; though they may have had the first open Professors of Atheism among them, as the *Egyptians* have had the Invention of the grossest Sorts of Superstition. For, according to *Ælian*<sup>x</sup>, *The Wisdom of the Barbarous Nations*, i. e. those that were not *Greeks*, is highly to be commended upon this account, that none of them ever fell to Atheism, or called the Being of a God, or a Providence, that takes care of us, in question.

WELL, but some will needs have it, that the Belief of a Providence and a Future State, belonged only to the Ignorant Vulgar, and that no Philosophers or Wise Men believed them. And the Author of the *Discourse of Free-thinking* asserts, that *Solomon* himself denied the Immortality of the Soul, and argued for the Eternity of the World, and against a Future State, in the Book of *Ecclesiastes*: And he pretends to vindicate his *Want of Knowledge*, as he calls it, in this important Point, by observing, "That the Immortality of the Soul was no where plain in the *Old Testament*, was denied by the *Sadducees*, the most philosophical Part of the *Jewish* Nation, and of whom their Magistrates principally consisted; was thought doubtful by most Sects of the *Grecian* Philosophers, and denied by the *Stoicks*, the most religious Sect of them all; had never, according to *Cicero*, been asserted in Writing by any *Greek* Author extant in his Time, before *Pherecydes* of the Island of *Syrus*, and was first taught by the *Egyptians*, or, according to our learned Sir *John Marsbam*, was the most noble Invention. No wonder therefore (says he) if *Solomon* reasons like the Learned Men of his own Country, and the more learned Philosophers of the neighbouring Nations". As to the *Old Testament*, I think it may be proved beyond Exception, that the Patriarchs believed a Future State, and acted upon that Belief: so that the Thing is rather taken as an allowed Principle of Natural Religion, than offered to be formally proved by the first Revelation; which is a plainer Evidence of its being anciently believed, than any explicate Declaration of the Truth of it would be. As for the *Egyptian* Invention, I have mentioned it already; and as to the *Sadducees*, they were very far from being the most philosophical Part of the *Jewish* Nation, as he would have them; for *Josephus*, who knew them well, represents them quite otherwise: But let them be as Philosophical a Sect as they will, there were none of them in *Solomon's* Time, for him to reason like; though there might be sensual People, as there are in all Ages, that have but little Regard for another Life, (such as they afterwards were,) against whose Practices *Solomon* often argues. Nor have we any Account extant, of any learned Philosophers in the Neighbouring Nations, except what are mentioned in Holy Writ, as far inferior to *Solomon* in Wisdom. Men of Learning were very few, among the *Greeks* especially, at that Time; and if there were any, we have none of their Writings to know what their Opinion was, or how they argued against another Life: For *Solomon* is at least as old as *Homer*, who is the first Heathen Author whose genuine Works are come down to us; and he was certainly acquainted with the Doctrine of a Future State, and took it to be generally believed, though he does not speak of it in a

<sup>w</sup> *Melpom.* cap. 94, & 95.

<sup>x</sup> Καὶ τίς ἐκ αὐτῶν ἐπὶ τῇ βελότῃ σοφίαν. ἔγχε μὴδεὶς αὐτῶν εἰς αἰθερίαν ἐξέπεσε, μηδὲ ἀμφιβάλλουσι περὶ θεῶν, ἀρεγνέ εἰσιν ἢ ἔκ εἰσι, καὶ ἀρεγνέ ἡμῶν φροντίζουσιν ἢ ὄ, &c. *Ælian. var. Hist.* lib. 2. cap. 31.

<sup>y</sup> Pag. 151, 152.



Philosophical Manner, or argue for it from the Nature of the Soul, as *Thales* afterwards did<sup>z</sup>. But the Truth is, the great Design of *Solomon* in that Book, out of which this Author pretends to make him argue against a Future State, is to establish the Certainty of a Future Judgment; which he not only mentions in several Parts of it, to keep up the Sense of it in Men's Minds as they go along in it, but has made this the Conclusion of the whole Matter: <sup>a</sup> *Fear God and keep his Commandments, for this is the whole of Man: For God shall bring every Work into Judgment, with every secret Thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.* Now can any Man of a common Capacity, who reads this, believe that *Solomon* denied a Future State? And if this Author could, either ignorantly or wilfully, give so gross a Misrepresentation of what every *English* Reader may so easily discover in him, we ought not to be surprized, if he have strangely perverted the Sense of other Writers, which do not lie so much in the Way of every common Reader.

As to the Opinion of Philosophers, which he would persuade us to have been generally against a Future State, *Tully* has, in divers Places of his Writings, told us, that the ancientest of them, and all the wisest and best, did hold the Immortality of the Soul; and that the contrary was but a novel Opinion among them. <sup>b</sup> *I cannot, says he, by any means come into their Opinion, who have of late Times begun to reason, that the Soul dies with the Body, and that there is an End of all at Death; the Authority of the Ancients is of much more Value with me.* And by Ancients he means those that had philosophized upon the Subject; as appears by the Opposition to those, who lately begun to philosophize otherwise; and by his adding over and above, as distinct Arguments to persuade him to the same Thing, the Practice of the old *Romans*, the Doctrine and Fame of the *Pythagoreans*, who lived in Part of *Italy*; and the constant Opinion of *Socrates*, who was, in the Judgment of *Apollo*, the wisest of Men, <sup>c</sup> *and who did not say sometimes one Thing and sometimes another in this Point, as in many others; but always asserted the same, that the Souls of Men were Divine, and returned to Heaven when they departed out of the Body.* This indeed he says in the Person of *Lælius*; but in the Beginning of the Book, or Dedication of it to *Atticus*, he allows all that is said to be his own Sense of the Matter; as he does likewise what he delivers in the Book *de Senectute*, under the Person of *Cato Major*; and in that he tells us, <sup>d</sup> *he was brought to this Belief, not only from Reason and Disputation, but from the Fame also and Authority of the greatest Philosophers.* And towards the End of that Book, he calls those that reasoned otherwise, meaning the Followers of *Epicurus*, in way of Contempt, <sup>e</sup> *Petty Philosophers.* And the very same Sentiments are expressed in all his Writings, where he delivers his Opinion in his own Person, and treats upon this Subject very largely, and from the same Topicks as he makes his *Cato Major* and *Lælius* do. It is obvious to any one, that reads his Writings, what an high Esteem he every where expresses for the Judgment of *Socrates*, in moral and religious Matters; and how high a Value he every where sets upon the Writings of *Plato*, more than upon other Authors: and since their Opinion is so well known, it would be a strong Presumption what were the Sentiments of *Tully* also, if we had nothing else to judge by; especially, considering what a mean Opinion he every where expresses of the Understanding of *Epicurus* in Matters of Philosophy, both Natural and Moral; and how little of common Learning he supposes him to have had. But he has not left us to guess at his Opinion from such Inferences, but has given us, as I have observed, plain Declarations of it.

THE Reason why I take the more Notice of this, as well as of what I observed out of him before, is, because the fore-mentioned Author, (p. 136.) has very un-

<sup>z</sup> Vid. *Plutarch. de Placit. Philos.* lib. 4. cap. 2.    <sup>a</sup> Chap. xii. § 13, 14.

<sup>b</sup> Neque enim assentiar iis qui hæc nuper differere coeperunt, cum corporibus simul animos interire, atque omnia morte deleri. Plus apud me antiquorum auctoritas valet. *Cic. in Lælio.*

<sup>c</sup> — Qui non tam hoc, tum illud ut in plerisque, sed idem dicebat semper, animos hominum esse divinos, iisque, cum è corpore excessissent, reditum in cælum patere. *Ibid.*

<sup>d</sup> Nec me solum ratio ac disputatio impulit ut ita crederem sed nobilitas etiam summorum philosophorum & auctoritas. *Cato Maj. cap. 21.*

<sup>e</sup> — Quidam minuti philosophi. *Cap. ult.*



Leng. fairly represented the Sense of this excellent Writer; insinuating as if he had denied the Immortality of the Soul, even in that very Book of *Tusculan Questions*, one great Part of which is designedly written to prove it; and the Proof of which he immediately goes upon, after those Words which this Author has so manifestly perverted, and upon which he has taken Occasion unjustly to charge others, for imposing upon the World, in delivering the Sense of *Tully*. Which Charge might fairly be retorted upon himself in divers Instances, [and particularly in that Character which he makes *Tully* give of *Epicurus*, p. 130.] if there were now any Occasion to do it. I must confess, when I see almost all the Writers which this Author has cited (which are not a few for so small a Compass) so grievously perverted, which could not happen either by Chance or mere Ignorance, I cannot but have a very suspicious Opinion of that Morality, which these Espousers of the Cause of Infidelity pretend to, since they have so little Regard to Truth or common Sincerity in defending it.

BUT to return; if the general Current of the ancient Philosophers had not greatly favoured the Doctrine of a Future State, as it would be very unlikely, that so judicious a Writer as *Tully*, should condemn the contrary for a novel and unphilosophical Doctrine, so it would have been the foolishhest Thing in the World, for the Followers of *Epicurus* to have magnified their Master so much, for being the Inventer of a New Doctrine, which, as they supposed, would effectually free Men from all Fear or Suspicion of what was to come hereafter; because he asserted, and pretended to have found out, upon philosophical Principles, the Mortality of the Soul as well as the Body. It would have been much more to their Purpose, to have shewn that the ancient Philosophers were of the same Opinion, if they had really been so, because the Concurrence of more wise Men in so important a Point, would have added more Weight to it; even though they had allowed *Epicurus* the Honour of reducing these scattered Principles into a new System.

BUT perhaps the Followers of *Epicurus* were not much more acquainted with the Opinions of the more ancient Philosophers, than their Master was, who pretended that he was self-taught, and had been beholding to no body for his Learning; which, as *Tully* observes, might very easily be believed from the Meanness of it. (*De Nat. Deor. lib. 1.*)

HOWEVER, though we may allow them to have been no great Searchers into Antiquity, yet it seems not likely, that they should all so generally applaud him for the Founder of this Doctrine, if there had not been some Colour for it. If there had either been any formed Sect of Philosophers, or any considerable Number of Men famous for their Learning, who had expressly denied all future Existence of the Soul; it is hardly possible that all his Followers, and especially such as *Lucretius*, could have been so ignorant as not to have heard of it.

IT cannot indeed be denied, that the ancient Philosophers had very different Opinions one from another, about the Nature and Seat of the Soul, and likewise about the Extent of its Duration. For, according to *Tully*, *They that hold the Separation of the Soul and Body at Death, do some of them think the Soul to be immediately dissipated, some hold it to continue for a long time, others for ever: i. e. they did not all hold it to be eternal, or absolutely immortal, who yet held its future Existence in a separate State after the Body.* Neither need it be denied, that some of their Opinions were such, as being strictly pursued through all their Consequences, would be found very different from, and even inconsistent with that Immortality, which the clear Revelation of the Gospel has made more fully known to us. For as the primitive Doctrine or Tradition concerning either the Nature of God, or the Soul of Man, grew daily more and more corrupted, through a general vicious Practice, so those growing Corruptions did very much obscure the Reasonings, even of those of the best Understanding, and render them liable to much Uncertainty, when they came to particular Explications of what they were

<sup>f</sup> Qui discedere animum censent, alii statim dissipari, alii diu manere, alii semper. *Tuscul. lib. 1. cap. 9.*



in the general persuaded of from Tradition. They did not sufficiently distinguish *Leng.* between the Nature of Body and Spirit, when they first begun to philosophize *SERM.* about them. And from hence we find that some, who for certain held the Soul's *IV.* Immortality, yet are said to have thought it only a finer sort of Matter: And the Opinions of others concerning the Seat or chief Residence of the Soul in the Body, have been sometimes mistaken for their Opinion of its Nature or Substance; particularly *Empedocles*, is by *Tully* said to have thought the Soul to be *Cordi fusum sanguinem*; yet, from what *Plutarch* says, it is evident, he meant this only for the Seat of the Soul, and not the Soul itself. However, if we consult the Remains of what is come down to us, of the most eminent Philosophers among the Ancients, we may see that a Providence and a Future State was what the wisest and most virtuous of them always held, and without which they could not tell how to solve the Appearances either of the natural or moral World.

I SHALL not now produce any particular Passages out of the ancient Writers to this purpose, because I shall have Occasion to alledge some of them hereafter, when I come to shew, that this Belief, or universal Consent, concerning some sort of Divine Providence, and some kind of Future State, did not arise at first from any Art, or Contrivance, or Compact of Men, in order to keep one another in awe; but was really antecedent to it, and built upon a more universal Principle. Of which, with God's Assistance, I design to speak the next Opportunity.

*Tusc. Quæst. lib. 1. cap. 9. Plut. de Placitis Philos. lib. 4. cap. 5.*



## S E R M O N V.

Preached *May* the 6th, 1717.

H E B. xi. 6.

*But without Faith it is impossible to please God: for he that cometh to God, must believe that He is, and that He is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

Leng.  
SERM.  
V.

I HAVE already, from these Words, taken occasion to shew, in my two last Discourses,

I. THAT, according to the general Sentiments of Mankind, there cannot be any perfect Morality expected, where there is no Belief of the first Principles of Religion.

II. THAT therefore all Societies of Men, that have ever subsisted in the World in any tolerable Order, have always professed the Belief of God's Existence, and at least of some kind of Providence over Men, and an Expectation of some Divine Rewards and Punishments.

I SHALL now proceed to consider the *Third* Thing, *viz.*

III. THAT this Belief or universal Consent did not arise from any Art, or Contrivance, or Compact of Men, in order to keep one another in awe, but was really antecedent to it, and built upon a more universal Principle.

My Meaning is, That the first Principles of Religion were not an human Invention, but were known and acknowledged by Mankind, before designing Men pretended to make any secular or political use of them. The shewing of this will be an Answer to that Objection, with which some Men think they can do great Execution against all Religion, when they call it *Priestcraft* and Contrivance of artificial Men, who have deceived all the rest of the World, except themselves, and some few others of great Caution and deep Penetration, who scorn to be imposed upon, and are therefore resolved to assert their own Freedom, in believing nothing. Now though in this and the last Age there have been divers Persons, who have mightily pleased themselves in dressing up their own *Scepticism*, or Inclination to Infidelity, after this manner; yet the Objection itself is by no means new. Nor indeed can it be expected, that any new Discovery should be made of any real Objection, which can affect the first Principles of Religion, after they have stood the Trial of so many thousand Years, notwithstanding the great Inclination which some Persons, in almost every Age, have shewn to discard them. New Turns of Wit against some particular Modes of Religion may be offered, and old Objections may be new modelled, so as to startle, or unsettle for a Time, the Minds of weak and unexperienced Men, who have not heard of them before; yet when they come to be stripped of their new Dress, they appear to be

at



at the Bottom nothing but what has been said many Times before, and found upon Examination very insufficient. And thus as to this Objection now before us, it is well known, that, in several Ages of the World, Men that have bore Ill-will to Religion, as being very uneasy under the Restraints of it, and have therefore been desirous of promoting and encouraging Atheistical Principles, have offered such Suggestions as this against the Truth of all Religion, viz. That the first Notions of it were introduced into the World by crafty Men, who imposed them upon the Ignorance and Credulity of rude and barbarous People, in order to keep them under Government, by the Fear of invisible Beings; and contrived an Order of Men, whom they let into the Secret, whose Interest it should be to support and encourage such a Belief, and that by this means it has been propagated from one Generation to another. The most plausible Pretence for this Suggestion is taken from hence, that a great many Things, which, upon due Examination, appear to have been Cheat and Imposture, have yet for a long-time been current in the World, as Part of Religion, and passed as such without Contradiction: And from hence they venture to insinuate, that the very Foundation of Religion itself is of the same kind, i. e. a mere human Contrivance. And they know very well, that if any considerable Number of Men could be brought heartily to entertain such a Suspicion, it would greatly weaken the Credit of all Religion, and bring an Odium upon all who profess it, as being either imposed upon themselves, or in a Confederacy to impose upon others.

Now though I am fully persuaded, that not half of those who make this Insinuation, do really believe it to be true, because we find, that in other Parts of their arguing, they are often forced to admit some Things that are utterly inconsistent with such a Belief; yet because such Insinuations, though they be known to be mere Calumny, by those that use them, may do much Mischief, by filling the Minds of weak and unwary People with Doubts and Scruples; therefore it is fit that the Matter should be set in a clear Light, and the Weakness of such Suggestions shewn anew, though it have often been done before; since the Suggestions themselves are frequently renewed, with an Intent at least to disparage Religion, and weaken Men's Concern for it.

THE Method which I now intend to take, in shewing the Weakness and Folly of this Pretence against the Truth of the Principles of Religion, shall be this:

*First*, To consider it in the way of Fact, whereby it will appear to be without any Ground or Foundation in point of History.

*Secondly*, IN the way of Reason and Argument, to shew the Absurdity of such a Supposition.

*First*, To consider it in the Way of Fact, whereby it will appear to be without any Ground or Foundation in point of History.

THEY that pretend to give an Account, how the generality of Mankind came to be possessed with so remarkable an Opinion, as that of the Being of a God, all at once, if it had no antecedent Foundation in Nature, nor were ever known among them before, should, one would think, in Reason be concerned to assign some Time and Place for so extraordinary an Event, to give it at least some Colour of Probability. For if there ever was a Time, when all Mankind was entirely without any Notion of a God, or Providence, and had always before continued so, but yet all at once, either by Consent or Compulsion, were brought to agree in the Belief of his Being; so great a Revolution could not easily have been forgotten, but that some Footsteps of it must remain, and some Memorial of it be preserved in some Part of the World by some means or other. It is indeed supposed to have been brought about before there was any Learning or History, when People were all very rude and ignorant, and easy to be imposed upon by

<sup>a</sup> Quid? Ii, qui dixerunt totam de Diis Immortalibus opinionem fictam esse ab hominibus sapientibus reip. causa, ut, quos ratio non posset, eos ad officium Religio duceret, nonne omne religionem funditus sustulerunt? Cotta apud Cic. de Nat. Deor. lib. 1. cap. 42.



Leng. their Governours; but then those Governours must at the same time be supposed  
 S E R M. to have been Men of very extraordinary Parts and great Subtlety indeed, who  
 V. could with so great Dexterity bring such a wonderful Change to pass, without  
 being taken notice of; there must have been such a prodigious Disproportion be-  
 tween the Capacities of the Governours and their People, as has never been known  
 in any Age or Country since. But not to insist too rigorously upon such Scruples,  
 which yet must require a great degree of Credulity to get over, let us consider,  
 what Pretence they have from Antiquity for supposing such a Fact: and though  
 they cannot assign the exact Time, when such a general Belief first began, yet at  
 least they ought to pitch upon some Time antecedent to it, when there was no  
 such Belief, or else they ought not to blame us for thinking it to be as old as  
 Mankind.

IT would indeed be unreasonable to expect, that they should bring us any au-  
 thentick written History, of a Time which may be supposed to have been so long  
 before Writing was invented; but at least there should be some traditional Rela-  
 tions of it preserved in some Parts of the World, like the Story of *Deucalion's*  
*Deluge*, which Tradition should in Time come to be taken notice of in History,  
 as soon as History begins to appear. But now they can alledge nothing like this  
 in the first Beginnings of History, but the farther we go backwards into Antiqui-  
 ty, the stronger the Tradition runs against this Suggestion. We may indeed trace  
 up some particular Kinds of Idolatry to their first Original, and we may also come  
 up to a Time when Idols began to be worshipped instead of God; but to a Time  
 when Men owned or believed no God at all, we cannot come. We may go back,  
 for instance, to the Deification of *Hercules*, or *Bacchus*, or the rest of those ima-  
 ginary Deities, who were once mortal Men, and whose Worship therefore had a  
 Beginning from Men; but the higher we go beyond this, the nearer we shall  
 come to the original Notion of the true God, the Maker of Heaven and Earth.

AND to this purpose, it is a very remarkable Observation which *Aristotle* makes  
 concerning this very Kind of ancient Tradition, *That there are these Gods*, says  
 he, *and that the Deity contains* (or encompasses) *all Nature, are Notions that have*  
*been delivered down by primitive and ancient Men, and left to Posterity wrapped*  
*up in the Dress of Fable; but that other Things have been fabulously added to per-*  
*suade the Multitude, and for the Benefit of Law and publick Utility. For thus*  
*they say, for Instance, that these Gods are of human Shape, and are like some other*  
*Animals, and divers other Things consequent upon these Opinions, or agreeable to*  
*them; from which if a Man should separate, and take only that which was first or*  
*original, namely, That they thought Gods were the first Beings, he might well*  
*think it divinely spoken; and that perhaps every Art or Science, being often found*  
*out as far as possible, and lost again, these their Opinions have been preserved as*  
*Reliques to this Time. The Opinion then of our Forefathers, and that which comes*  
*from the first Men, is only so far evident to us.* This Passage deserves to be the  
 more taken notice of, because *Aristotle* had as great an Insight into the Nature of  
 human Policy as most Men, and is as little suspected of Credulity, in Matters of  
 Religion: and in this Place he makes as much Allowance for human Invention,  
 as the Case will bear; and yet he plainly makes a great Difference between the  
 Truth of Things delivered, and that fabulous Dress, in which it was conveyed  
 down to Posterity; and likewise puts a manifest Distinction between the true ori-  
 ginal Tradition, or Belief of a Deity, and those other Conceits, which were su-  
 peradded to it by human Invention, for some publick Convenience, or better go-  
 verning the People, which might be altered and changed, in different Ages and  
 Places, while the fundamental Tradition continued the same. He had before, in  
 this Treatise, with a great deal of metaphysical Reasoning, asserted a First, Eternal,

<sup>b</sup> Παροξύνει δὲ ὅτι καὶ τὰ ἀρχαίων καὶ παλαιῶν ἐν μύθοις ἡλικίᾳ καταλειμμένα τοῖς ὕστερον, ὅτι οἱ αὖτε εἰσι εἴται, καὶ ἀνέχον-  
 ται τοῖς θεοῖς τὸ ὅλον φύσιν, ταῦτα δὲ λοιπὰ μυθικῶς ἤδη περιήχθη πρὸς τὸ περὶ τὸ πολλῶν καὶ πρὸς τὸ εἰς τὰς νόμους καὶ τὸ συμφέρον  
 χρῆσιν ἀνθρώπων τε καὶ τῶν τεύχων, καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ζῶων ὁμοίως τισὶ λέγουσι, καὶ ταῖς ἑτέροις ἀκόλουθα καὶ ἀναπλήσια τοῖς  
 εἰρημύτοις ὧν εἴτις χωρίσας αὐτὸ λάβοι μόνον τὸ πρῶτον, ὅτι οἱ αὖτε τὰς πρώτας εἰσίας εἶναι; θεῶν δὲ ἐν εἰρήνῃ νομίσαι,  
 καὶ κατὰ τὴν εἰρήνην πολλαὺς ἀνθρώπων εἰς τὸ δυνατὸν ἐκείνης ἐκείνης καὶ φιλοσοφίας, ἐπὶ αὐτῶν φθινομένων, ἐπὶ ταῖς ταῖς  
 δόξαις ἐκείνων, οἷον λείψανα ἀποσπασθῆναι μέχρι τῆς νῦν ἢ μὴ ἐν παλαιᾷ δόξῃ, καὶ ἢ ἀπὸ τῶν πρώτων ἐπὶ τοῖς αὐτοῖς ἢ πα-  
 ροξύνει μόνον. *Arist. Metaphys. lib. Δ. κεφ. η. in fine.*



Active Principle, as the efficient Cause of all Things; <sup>c</sup> condemning those Philosophers as very weak Reasoners, who offered to philosophize about the Nature of Things, without taking in this first Principle; and commending <sup>d</sup> *Anaxagoras*, for making *Mind* or Understanding the Cause of the World, and of all Order in it: though he blames him for some other Parts of his Philosophy, and particularly for introducing this *Mind*, only out of Necessity for making the World, and when he was at a pinch, for want of other Causes; since he was, in other Matters, so willing to alledge any other Cause rather than *Mind*. From hence it seems, in *Aristotle's* Opinion, that *Anaxagoras* ought to have attributed more to the same *Nēs* or *Mind*, in other Parts of his Philosophy, than he was wont to do. *Aristotle* himself, by considering the Nature of *Mind*, and of a First Mover and Cause of Motion, concludes, that <sup>e</sup> *God is the most excellent, eternal Being; so that Life, and continual eternal Existence belongs to God; for this is the Notion of God.* And it is to this one first Mover, who is himself immoveable, and indivisible, and unchangeable, the first Being and Cause of all Things, that he applies the Meaning of the true original Tradition before mentioned, when stripped of all human Addition, and Fable or Allegory. For certain therefore he did not believe that the Acknowledgment of the Being of one supreme God, was any human or political Invention. What Opinion *Plato* before him had of this Matter, is evident from the whole Tenour of his Writings; the great Design of which is, to establish the first Principles of Religion and Morality, the Being and Providence of God, the natural and eternal Distinction of Good and Evil, the Immortality of the Soul, and a State of future Rewards and Punishments; and he observes how much happier the first Ages of the World were, and how much more innocent and virtuous, when the firm Belief of these Principles of Religion did more universally prevail among them. And upon this <sup>f</sup> he instances in the Time of *Rhadamanthus*, the most ancient Legislator among the *Cretans*, according to old Tradition, who had a ready and expeditious Way of administering Justice, and determining all Controversies, by the Interposition of an Oath, or appeal to God: for he knew that the Men of that Time were all effectually convinced of the Being of a God, and the Wisdom and Justice of his Nature. But (says he) in these later Times, when Men are degenerated, and their Principles so corrupted, that some disbelieve the very being of a God, others imagine there is no Providence at all over human Affairs, and a much greater number are persuaded, that the Gods may be appeased with some little outward Services or Sacrifices, and be flattered, so as not to punish them, though they commit the greatest Acts of Fraud or Villany; other Kind of Laws, and other Forms of Judicature, are now become necessary to restrain those, whom Conscience and the Sense of a Deity do not persuade; which in those primitive Times of Religion, and Simplicity of Manners, were the great Guard of Virtue in the Age of *Rhadamanthus*. Such Reflections as these, shew how far this Philosopher was from thinking, that in fact there had ever been formerly a Time, when Men were without all Sense of Religion; and, on the contrary, how much stronger and clearer he thought the Sense of Religion to have been in former Ages, as they approached nearer to the Beginning of the World. For he supposes, that the first Men came from God, and knew their own Original, and therefore he tells us, in respect to this primitive Tradition, <sup>g</sup> *That we ought to give Credit to those who were, as they said, the first Offspring of the Gods, since they surely knew their own Progenitors. It is therefore impossible to disbelieve the Children of the Gods, though they do not speak in the way of strict and absolute Demonstration; but according to general Law or Custom, we ought to believe them, as professing to declare only Things which pecu-*

<sup>c</sup> Νῆν δὲ τις εἰπὼν εἶναι, καθάπερ ἐν τοῖς ζώοις καὶ ἐν τῇ φύσει τὸ αἰτίον ἐστὶν κόσμος καὶ τὰ τάξεως πάσης, οἷον νήφων ἐφάνη παρ' εἰκῇ λέγοντας τὰς πρώτους. Φανερώς μὲν ἂν Ἀναξαγόραν ἴσμεν ἀψάμνον τῶν λόγων. *Metaph.* lib. 1. cap. 3.

<sup>d</sup> Ἀναξαγόρας τε γὰρ μηχανὴν λέγει τὴν πρὸς τὴν κοσμοποιάν, καὶ ὅταν ἀπορήσῃ ἀπὸ τίνος αἰτίας ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἐστὶν, τότε ἔλκεται αὐτόν. Ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἄλλοις πάντα μάλλον αἰτία τῶν γινόμενων ἢ νῆν. *ibid.* cap. 4.

<sup>e</sup> — Φαμέν δὲ τὸ Θεὸν εἶναι ζῶον αἰδίων ἀετόν. ὥς ζῶν καὶ αἰώνων σωτήρ, καὶ αἰδίων ὑπαρχὸς τῶν Θεῶν. τὸ γὰρ ὁ Θεός. *Metaph.* 12. 7.

<sup>f</sup> Vid. *Plat. de Leg.* lib. 12. p. 948.

<sup>g</sup> In *Timæo*, p. 40. Ed. Serrani.

liarly



*Leng.* *liarly belonged to themselves, and with which they were particularly acquainted.*  
 S E R M. It may indeed be objected to this Passage, that *Plato* applies it to those which  
 V. were vulgarly reputed Gods in his own Time, according to the fabulous Heathen  
 ~~~~~ Genealogies of them; for which he allows, that no certain Argument, or necessary  
 Demonstration, could be given, besides this Tradition; and that therefore he uses
 his only in compliance with Law and Custom, and to screen himself from Harm,
 while he did not in his Heart believe those vulgarly reputed Gods to be really
 such. Now admitting that he applies this Argument of Tradition to a wrong
 Object in this Instance, and seemingly defends the reigning Superstition and Poly-
 theism of his own Time by it; yet from the Use which he makes of it, to lead
 Men to the first Creator of all Things, whom he immediately after brings in,
 giving Instruction to these created Deities, how they should proceed, according
 to the Powers he had given them, in producing other inferior rational Beings; it
 is evident, that he thought the original Belief of Mankind came gradually, by
 some means or other, from the Father and Maker of all Things. For it is to be
 observed, that he makes two Sorts of creating Gods; one in compliance with the
 then prevailing Theology, which took the Heaven and the Earth, the Sun and
 Stars, for visible Gods, as supposing them to be animated; the other Sort was of
 those *Δαίμονες* which were not visible, but could, when they pleased, make them-
 selves known to us; of whom he says, ^h That to give an Account of their Gene-
 ration was above human Skill, but we ought to believe the most ancient Tradition,
 which came from themselves, as it follows in the Passage which I mentioned be-
 fore: and a little after, he calls the former Sort, those which ⁱ *apparently move*
about; or, according to *Tully's* Translation, ^k *qui moventur palamque se ostendunt*;
 and the other, *those which shew themselves only in such a measure as they please*,
 i. e. *qui eatenus nobis declarantur quoad ipsi volunt*. Now if we do but allow,
 that by these *created Gods*, who were *invisible*, but had a *Power of manifesting*
themselves, in such measure as they pleased, *Plato* meant such Kind of Beings as
 we call *Angels*, we may then see a farther Glimpse of original Truth shining through
 this dark Tradition, and conveyed down to us not only the Notion of one supreme
 God, but of these his First Ministers, which are, even in Scripture Language,
 called the *Sons of God*.

It is to be observed, that the first Men of Letters, of whom we have any Ac-
 count in *Heathen* Antiquity, were such as they called *Theologers*, that is, Poets or
 others, who treated of Matters relating to the Gods and their Worship, and who
 sometimes gave an Account of the original of Things in a religious way, upon the
 ground, as it should seem, of ancient traditionary Doctrine; which being by de-
 grees corrupted according to the Poets Fancy, and many Fables introduced into
 it; some by way of Allegory disguising the Truth, and others, in compliance with
 growing Superstition, adding human Passions and Vices to the Notion of the Gods
 they worshipped; it came to pass in Time, that these Fables, being set off in a
 pleasing manner by the Poets, became the Occasion of such infinite Error in the
 Superstructure, that the Foundation of Truth was overwhelmed and almost quite
 lost by it. Some Men therefore being weary of this Way, struck into another
 Method, and began to offer at giving an Account of the Original of Things in a
Physiological Way. But here they were greatly confounded: For the wisest of
 them plainly saw, ^l that there was no proceeding in this Way, without admitting
 an intelligent Principle and first Cause of all Things. Though some, that were
 conceited of their own Parts, fancied they could solve every Thing by Matter and
 Motion, even without a first Mover, yet in this they got but little Credit among
 considering Men. The Vanity and Uncertainty of *Physiological* Speculations, and
 the great Difficulty of coming to any certain and useful Conclusion that Way,
 made *Socrates* turn his Thoughts to moral and practical Philosophy, as the pro-
 per Business of Men: and this he saw could not subsist without a firm Belief of

^h — Τα δὲ Θεῶν ὁρατῶν καὶ θνητῶν εἰρημένα φύσεως ἐχέτω τέλος. Περὶ δὲ τῶν ἀφαν δαιμόνων εἰπεῖν ἔ γινῶναι τὴν
 ῥήσιν μείζον ἢ καθ' ἡμᾶς πεισέον ὅ τοῖς εἰρηκόσιν, &c.

ⁱ — Ὅσοι τε ἀπολαύσι φανερώς, καὶ ὅσοι φαίνοντ' καθόσον αὐτὸν ἐθέλωσι, &c.

^k In his Book *de Universo*. ^l See *Aristot. Metaphys. lib. 1. cap. 3.*

the Being and Providence of a God and of a Future State, and without these Principles he knew there was no proceeding to any Satisfaction, either in the Theological or Physiological Way. Upon his Foundation *Plato*, who was his Scholar, built all his Philosophy, but yet taking in all the Light that former Wise Men could afford him; and so he was curious to search into all the Traditions of former Times, and to consider what Reliques of ancient Truth were hid under the Disguise of Poetical Theology, as well as the Opinions of those who sought to find it in the Way of Reason and Philosophy. And he could not in either of these Ways find any Ground for Atheism, or Suspicion that the Principles of Religion were a Cheat.

THOUGH *Plato* be one of the oldest of those Philosophers, whose Writings are come down to us in any Degree entire, yet we do not want several Instances of the Sentiments of such Philosophers as lived before him; who, though they had no great Opinion of the prevailing Superstitions of their own Times, which were established both by Law and Custom, yet made both the Being of God and the future State of the Soul, not only an Article of their Creed, but a Principle of their Philosophy.

Anaxagoras, whom I mentioned before, got the Surname of Νῆς, *Mind* or *Intellect*, not only from his great Skill and Understanding in Natural Philosophy, but from his constant asserting, that *not Chance or Necessity, but an eternal Mind produced and ordered all Things*, as ^m *Plutarch* and others inform us.

Thales before him is reckoned one of the first, who attained to any great Skill in Natural Philosophy or Physiology, and is by ⁿ *Aristotle* called, *The Prince or Founder of this sort of Philosophy*: And he is generally reckoned the first in Order of the *Ionian* Class. And it is well known, that as he supposed ^o *Water to have been the first Matter out of which all other Things were made*; so he affirmed, that *God was that eternal Mind which formed all Things out of it*; and that *God knew not only the Actions, but the Thoughts and Intentions of all Men*^p. And it is related as one of his remarkable Apophthegms, ^q *That God is the most ancient of all Beings, because without any Beginning, and the World the most beautiful, as being the Workmanship of God*. And his Opinion of the Immortality of the Soul was so much taken notice of, that he is by some said to have been the first that taught it, as *Diogenes Laërtius* informs us: which is not so to be understood, as if he had been thought the first that believed a Future State, for the contrary to that appears from all the Poets who lived before him; but only that he was one of the first among the *Greeks* that maintained its Immortality upon Philosophical Principles. And the like may be said for *Pherecydes*, who lived much about the same Age: for he is also by some said to have been ^r *the first, of whom we have any written Account, that said the Souls of Men were eternal*. And in this Sense *Tully* takes it; for he says, *there were as he believes many others of the same Opinion before Pherecydes*. But their written Memoirs in the Philosophical Way, it seems, went no higher than his Age. And this is agreeable to the Opinion of *Tully*, concerning the Belief of those who lived long before the Beginning of the Philosophical Age, in this very Case: *They, says he, who had not yet learned any thing of Natural Philosophy, which begun not to be cultivated 'till many Years after, had a full Persuasion of so much as they learned from the Admonitions of Nature, though they knew not the Reasons and Causes of Things*. I need not mention the Opinion of *Pythagoras*, who is said to have been his Scholar, and who was

^m *Plutarch. in vita Periclis.*

ⁿ *Θαλῆς μὲν ὁ τῆς τοιαύτης ἀρχηγὸς φιλοσοφίας. Aristot. Metaph. lib. 1. cap. 3.*

^o *Thales enim Milesius, qui primus de talibus rebus quæsit, Aquam dixit esse initium rerum: Deum autem, eam mentem quæ ex aqua cuncta fingeret. Cic. de Nat. Deor. lib. 1. cap. 10.*

^p *Vid. Diog. Laert. in vitâ Thaletis.*

^q *Προσφύτατον ἦ ὁ ἰὺν Θεὸς, ἀρχόντων γὰρ καὶ κόσμου, ποιῆμα γὰρ Θεῶ. Laertius in vitâ.*

^r *Itaque credo etiam alios tot seculis, sed quod literis exstet, Pherecydes Syrius primus dixit, Animos hominum esse sempiternos. Tusc. Quæst. lib. 1. cap. 16.*

^s *Qui nondum ea, quæ multis post annis tractari cœpissent, physica didicissent, tantum sibi persuaserant quantum naturâ admonente cognoverant: rationes & causas rerum non tenebant. Cic. Tusc. Quæst. lib. 1. cap. 13.*

Leng. the Head of the *Italick* Order of Philosophers; for his Doctrine is sufficiently known. Now it appears, from the Beginning of these two Orders or Successions of Philosophy, from *Thales* and *Pythagoras*, that how much soever the first Philosophers among the *Greeks* might be weary of those poetical Fictions, which had been brought into the Religion of their Forefathers, yet they had no Suspicion, that the Principles upon which Religion itself was founded had been an human Invention: And much less can they be suspected of coming in for any Share of such Invention, since most of them were so far from being partial towards such Principles any farther than the evident Force of Truth persuaded them, that some Pretenders to Philosophy immediately after *Thales*, as *Anaximander*, *Democritus*, *Leucippus*, were the first that attempted to sow the Seeds of Atheism in their Physiology, which yet did not grow up to any formed Principle 'till some time after, nor were they ever able to produce such a tolerable System, as to give Men of Sense any Satisfaction, without admitting an intelligent Principle, which they would fain have avoided.

As for those Surmises which are raised from Passages picked up out of *Diodorus Siculus*, *Lucian*, *Ammianus Marcellinus*, or other later Authors, about the Original of Religion in *Egypt*, as if the first Principles of it had been invented there, what I have said in my former Discourse, is sufficient to shew the Unreasonableness of them. And indeed such Surmises would never have been thought of, if there had been any Probability of finding another Time when Religion did first begin, besides the first Beginning of Mankind. But the *Egyptians*, pretending to such an incredible Antiquity of Government above other Nations, might safely claim the Invention of every Thing: And admitting their Chronology, nobody could disprove them. And they were ready enough to impose their own Fables upon the rest of the World that would believe them.

Herodotus (*Euterpe*, cap. 142.) acquaints us, that they pretended to shew him a Succession of Kings of human Race for above ten thousand Years together, down from the Time of *Orus* (who was the last of the Gods that personally reigned among them) to *Sethos* the Priest of *Vulcan*, in whose Reign the Army of the *Affyrians* under *Sennacharib* was wonderfully destroyed; and they told him, that in that long Tract of Time the Sun had so altered his Course, as to have twice risen in the West and set in the East, contrary to what it now does; and yet that *Egypt* had continued all the while the same. And now are not such prodigious Antiquaries very fit to give an Account of the Original of Religion, who before this long Race of Men, had a Succession of Gods reigning among them, for I do not know how many Ages together? However, if any are willing to allow Religion to be so very old, we are well content; because then we are sure they can never prove its Beginning to have been since *Egypt* was first inhabited.

UPON the whole therefore, considering that neither Time nor Place can be assigned to give any reasonable Ground for supposing, that the first Principles of Religion were any human Contrivance, we might without further Argument conclude, that they were from the Beginning, and that, as *Tully* says, 'It was not any Conference, Compact, or Agreement of Men, that made them; nor was the Persuasion, or Belief of them, founded or established in Institution or Law; but that the Consent of all Nations in them is to be esteemed the Law of Nature. However, because some Men, who would fain have some Colour or Pretence to be Infidels, are resolved to suspect every Thing that relates to Religion, especially if it have the Countenance of Law or Authority on its Side; and would therefore insinuate, That although all Monuments of those ancient Times, when they suppose Men were without all Apprehensions of Religion, be destroyed, yet considering the Advantage which Politicians make of it, to keep Men in awe, they may be suspected to have had a great Hand in destroying them, the better to keep this Secret of Government from being ever examined into, after they had once luckily hit upon

* — Omnes tamen esse vim & naturam divinam arbitrantur. Nec verò id collocutio hominum aut consensus efficit; non institutis opinio est confirmata, non legibus. Omni autem in re consensus omnium gentium lex naturæ putanda est. *Cic. Tusc. lib. 1. cap. 13.*

it; and so Religion might be all Art and Contrivance at first, though no particular Account can now be given of it: I shall therefore endeavour,

Leng.
SERM.
V.

Secondly, To shew very briefly the Absurdity of such a Supposition in the Way of Reason and Argument. And to this purpose let it be considered,

1. THAT in order to favour such a Suspicion of the Original of Religion, we must likewise suppose, that this Project was begun when Men were all confined within a small Part of the World; that is, when they were either all under one Government, or when all the Governours of the World dwelt so near together, as to be in strict Agreement and close Correspondence with one another; so that all seeing the common Advantage of it, took care to come into the Design all at once, and to transmit it as a great *Arcanum* to future Generations. Now this Supposition will go near to destroy the very End for which it is made; for it will naturally lead Men to think, that Mankind might spring all at first from one common Parent, and so to admit, that the Scripture Account of the first peopling of the World may be very probable; and this will quite ruin the *Hypothesis* of those, who think that the Earth has been inhabited by Mankind from Eternity. And as for those that allow the present Frame, at least, of the World to have had a Beginning, they must put this great supposed Change of Mens Opinions about it so very near that Beginning, as to leave no Means of Discovery, whether ever there was any such Change or no; unless they could prove it impossible, that the first Men, and some few Generations that succeeded them, should have any Notion of God at all: which can never be done, except they can, by some demonstrative Argument, first prove the Being of God and his discovering of himself to Mankind impossible. Now 'tis very absurd, to make a Supposition, which can never be granted 'till we have first granted that which is designed to be proved by it.

2. LET it be considered, that it is a much more difficult Thing to plant a new Principle or Persuasion in a whole People, when it has no previous Foundation, but is directly contrary to all their former Apprehensions, than it is to make a political Use of a general Persuasion that already prevails among them; the latter may be done with Ease and by insensible Degrees, but the former can hardly be attempted without great Opposition. And however Force may over-rule Men's outward Profession for a Time, yet it cannot so easily change their inward Sentiments: For that is a Thing not to be effected in one Generation. And besides, to enable the most powerful Monarch to bring such a great Design about, he must either have a considerable Number, that do really already believe the Truth of what he designs to establish by their Assistance, and then the Supposition, that all the Truth of Religion depends upon such Establishment, is destroyed; or else he must really have a Number of People, that act against their own certain Knowledge, to establish a Principle of Conscience forbidding all such acting, which is still a great Absurdity. And as for this Monarch or Ruler himself, he must either really have believed the Principles which he designed to introduce among his People, and then we are to seek for an higher Original of it; or he must not have believed it, but known it to be a Cheat, and then how came he to venture upon an Experiment which might in the end really turn against him, when People saw that he intended to impose upon them? Which they would do, if he did not in all Things act as one that did really believe himself. Well, but to help out this Difficulty, and make People willing to be imposed upon, there are some (as Mr. *Hobbes* and others upon the Principles of *Lucretius*) that have advanced an additional *Hypothesis*, which is this: *viz. That there are naturally in Mankind some Seeds of Religion*; that is, some peculiar Qualities in the very Frame of their Nature, which easily dispose them to Religion; such as, an Inquisitiveness, or Desire of knowing the Causes of all Things, joined with an Ignorance of those Causes, or Inability to find them out; an Anxiety or endless Fear, about Things future, arising from the like Ignorance of Nature; and therefore a suspecting of some Power invisible, though they know not what; and a Desire, if possible, to prevent future and unforeseen Evils. And from hence they suppose, that cunning Men,

Leng. Men, knowing the Weaknesses of Human Nature, and taking Advantage of this
 SERM. general Ignorance and Fear, and pretending to shew them a short Way of solving
 V. all their Difficulties, by having recourse to an invisible and eternal Cause unknown,
 which is able to do every thing, they might with ease cultivate these Seeds of Religion into settled Principles; and the People would readily come into this Delusion, for which they were already prepared by Nature: And that when both Authority and Custom had confirmed it, and one Generation had propagated it down to another, who would then dispute the Truth of it? But now, how plausible soever this may seem, yet it greatly fails in the very first Principle, in supposing a natural Fear in all Men, without any natural Ground or Foundation; and yet, at the same Time, a natural Desire of knowing the Ground or Cause of that Fear. It seems allowed, that natural Reason teaches Men to enquire for a Cause of every Thing, (as supposing, that nothing is without a Cause) and not to rest satisfied in such Enquiry, 'till they come to a first Cause, from whence they can go no farther: And it is granted by these Men, that all Men have, and always had, a Fear of some invisible Being, [*Hobbes Leviath. lib. 1. cap. 12.*] and that they were very ready to close with the Opinion of those, who first told them, that the prime Object of this Fear was God, the first Cause of all Things: This infers, that the Fear of a Deity is very natural, and, in some degree, coeval with the first Constitution of Things. For what Reason then should the Truth of that Cause be rejected, which gives the best Account of this universal Effect? But why do these Men insist so much upon Fear, and make that the main Reason of Men's so easily assenting to the Principles of Religion? Have not Men Hopes as well as Fears? And why are not these taken into the Account? Are not those Attributes, which are the Foundation of Hope, as essential to the Notion of a Deity, as those which create Fear? It may be, they were unwilling to mention Hope, because this would be a Ballance for Fear, and so would spoil this Hypothesis, of Fear alone being the Occasion of Men's so easily entertaining the Notion of a Deity: Or it may be rather, that their Design is only to represent those Attributes of the Deity, which should make ill Men as unwilling as possible to believe his Being: Or that a Propension to Atheism arises from such a gloomy Spirit as is void of all Hope from a wise and good Being. However, I cannot but observe by the way, that Atheistical Men, in owning this universal Fearfulness of Mankind, do in effect give Judgment against themselves, and discover, that they are forced to entertain some Apprehension of a Deity whether they will or no. And though they will not endeavour to make themselves fit to look upon him as the Object of Adoration and Praise, of Love, and Hope, and Obedience, as being the Author of all Good to Mankind; yet they cannot help considering of him, as the Object of Fear and Dread, as being the Fountain of all Power, and it may be of Justice too: For that is what makes them so suspicious of Evil from him. However, from hence it may likewise be considered,

3. THAT as all wicked Men, who are desirous to continue such without any Controul from their own Consciences, have a strong Inclination to discard the Thoughts and Apprehensions of a Deity, because they have made it their Interest, that there should be none; so no doubt Men of this Temper would always have made great Opposition to the introducing of such a Belief among them, as would certainly give themselves great Uneasiness, if there had not been such a Foundation in Nature for it, as they could not wholly destroy. Nor would wicked Men fly to the Practice of strange and monstrous Superstitions, as a Refuge against the Uneasiness of their own Minds, under the Sense of a Deity, if the Impressions of it, and the Evidence for it were not too strong to be overcome: For I doubt not but many such Men really wish that there were no God, and would be glad to deliver themselves from the Thoughts of him if they could: But they find the Sense of his Existence planted so deep in Human Nature, that while they retain the Use of their Reason, they can never entirely root it up: which shews the Unreasonableness of supposing it to be of mere human planting; since, as *Plato*

^u Vid. *Platonem de Legg.* lib. 10. p. 888.

long ago observed, though there be divers, that in the Heat of their Youth, or otherwise, endeavour to persuade themselves that there is no God, yet very few could hold out long in this Persuasion. Leng. SERM. V.

It might also be observed, That if the Principles of Religion had been first introduced into the World merely by State Policy, the Politicians and Governours of the World should be likely to have known something of it, at least so much as to have been less subject to those Anxieties of Conscience, which the despising of such Principles, or living in opposition to them, generally creates: whereas we find on the contrary, that in all Ages the greatest of Men, who have had nothing to fear from human Power, have been as much afraid, by the secret Terrors of Religion, and have undergone as great Agonies of Mind, as the meanest of Mortals; which shews their natural Apprehension of a Power and Justice superior to them, even though they are unwilling to confess it.

BUT to conclude; — The manner in which the Christian Religion was first planted in the World, is an evident Demonstration against this Supposition of Policy. For it must be owned, that all human Power and Authority were against the Admission of it for some Ages, and yet it prevailed against all their Opposition: And it seems as if God Almighty, by taking this Method of propagating the Christian Doctrine, had designed for ever to silence this Objection against those first Principles of Religion, upon which the Christian is built. But this Consideration will come more properly to be spoken to upon another Occasion.

Now to the King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible, the only Wise God, be all Honour and Glory for ever and ever. Amen.

S E R M O N VI.

Preached September the 2d, 1717.

ROM. i. 19, 20, 21.

Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God hath shewed it unto them:

For the invisible Things of him, from the Creation of the World, are clearly seen, being understood by the Things that are made, even his eternal Power and Godhead; so that they are without Excuse:

Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, &c.

Leng.
S E R M.
VI.

IT is not necessary, to my present Undertaking, that I should give an Account either of the main Design of the Apostle in this Epistle, (which is principally to shew the Necessity, which both *Jews* and *Gentiles* were under, of embracing the Gospel of Christ, in order to their Justification before God,) or of the particular relation, which the Words of the Text bear to such a general Design; because I intend only to make use of them, as describing that Knowledge of God, which the Apostle affirms, that no reasonable and considerate Man can easily miss of; since from the Beginning of the World God has always given Men sufficient Evidence of his own Existence, so as to render those Men inexcusable, who would not glorify him as God, nor be thankful to him as their Creator and Preserver.

HOWEVER, it may be observed, that the Words are laid down as a Reason for that Assertion, which goes immediately before them, That, in the Gospel, *the Wrath of God is revealed from Heaven, against all Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of Men, who hold the Truth in Unrighteousness.* The Apostle had just before testified his great Readiness to preach the Gospel to the *Romans*, as well as to all others; owning, that he was by no means ashamed of it, how much soever some conceited Men might despise the Plainness and Simplicity of it, as well as the outward Meanness with which it appeared in the World; because he was fully convinced, that it was *the Power of God unto Salvation, to every one that believed it, both Jew and Gentile.* And that which makes this Doctrine of the Gospel, when sincerely believed, and heartily embraced, so powerful a Means of Salvation, he declares to be this, That *therein the Righteousness of God is revealed from Faith to Faith:* i. e. That Method which God hath taken to justify penitent Sinners by *Jesus Christ*, is now more clearly discovered, than it was formerly under the *Old Testament*, one Degree of Faith being added to another, according as the Revelation itself, containing Motives of Persuasion, is improved; though it was Faith in God, and not the exact outward Observance of a written Law, which could render Men righteous, or acceptable in the Sight of God, even under that former more obscure Declaration of his Will: for *by Works can no Flesh be justified, in that all have sinned: But the Just shall live by Faith.* But then

^a Rom. iii.
20.

then farther, that which both shews the Necessity of such a Justification by *Lehg.*
Christ, and proves the Doctrine of the Gospel to be so powerful a Means of *SERM.*
bringing Men to Repentance, and thereby to Salvation, is that clear Revelation, *VI.*
which is therein made from Heaven, of the Wrath of God fully declared *against*
all Ungodliness, and Unrighteousness of Men, whether Jews or Gentiles, *who hold*
the Truth in Unrighteousness. And that such a Declaration of God's Displeasure,
against all impenitent Sinners, is just and reasonable, appears from hence: That
God hath always communicated so much natural Knowledge of his own Being
to Mankind, as to render them inexcusable for not glorifying him as God, their
Maker and Benefactor, in the several Duties or Offices of Natural Religion or
Morality, in which they had been so grievously deficient. Even the *Gentiles* had
Light enough offered them, if they would have attended to it, to condemn their
abominable Practice, though they chose *Darkness rather than Light, because their*
Works were evil: Because that which may be known of God is manifest among
them, for God hath shewed it unto them: for the invisible Things of him from the
Creation of the World are clearly seen, being understood by the Things that are
made, even his eternal Power and Godhead, so that they are without Excuse:
because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were
thankful.

IN these Words there are two Things evidently asserted by the Apostle, both of
them directly contrary to those Pretences, with which Atheistical Men endeavour
to screen themselves from all the Terrors of Religion:

One is, *That God has, from the Beginning of the World, given sufficient Mani-*
festations of his own eternal Power and Godhead to Mankind by his Works, or by
what he has plainly done, and daily does in the World:

The other is, *That Men having such evident Means of knowing God, if they*
either disown, or take no notice of his Being; if they neither glorify him as God,
nor shew any Gratitude toward him; they become utterly inexcusable, and will
thereby certainly fall under his just Indignation, for their Neglect of him.

THE first of these Assertions is what I shall at present take notice of. For
having already, in my former Discourses, endeavoured to shew;

I. THAT according to the general Sentiments of Mankind, there cannot be any
perfect Morality expected, where there is no Belief of the first Principles of
Religion: And,

II. THAT therefore all Societies of Men, which have ever subsisted in any
Order in the World, have always professed the Belief of God's Existence, and at
least of some Kind of Providence, and some Expectation of divine Rewards and
Punishments: And,

III. THAT this Belief, or universal Consent, did not arise from any Art, or Con-
trivance, or Compact of Men, in order to keep one another in awe; but was
really antecedent to any such supposed Contrivance, and built upon a more uni-
versal Principle:

I SHALL now, according to my intended Method, proceed;

IV. To consider, upon what Foundation this general Belief or Persuasion, of
which I have hitherto spoken, is built, or from what Original it proceeds. Which
I shall take occasion to do from these Words of Saint Paul.

THE Question now before us is, What sufficient Cause there can be assigned for
so universal an Effect? And the Apostle says, that *what is or may be known of*
God, is manifest among Men, because God hath shewed it unto them; intimating
thereby, That the universal Notice which Mankind hath of a Deity, is made
unto

Leng. unto them by God himself; and the Way by which he conveys to them this Notice of his own Being and Power, and other knowable Attributes, is by his Works. *For the invisible Things of him, even his eternal Power and Godhead, from the Creation of the World, are clearly discovered, being understood by the Things that are made.* It is not very material to determine, whether the Words, *from the Creation of the World*, be here to be understood for the *Work of Creation*, from whence they might collect the Power of God the Creator; or to signify the *Time of the Creation*, when Man was first made; the Power of God being to be known by all Men, from that Time, by his Works, or by the Things that are made and preserved by him. For, take the Words in either of these Senses, the Assertion contained under them will come to much the same, and signifies, that God, by his Works of Creation and Providence, both ordinary and extraordinary, hath afforded unto all Men, ever since the World began, sufficient Means of being convinced of his eternal Power and Godhead: In the Judgment therefore of the Apostle, that universal Persuasion of Mankind, concerning God's Existence, is from God himself, and therefore proves his Being. But the Name of an Apostle is of no Authority, to persuade those Men who disown all Revealed Religion; and therefore we must view this Argument in another Light, and consider the Truth contained in it, only in the way of Natural Reason and Discourse. And in order to this, let us examine the several Ways by which so general a Persuasion can reasonably be supposed to have prevailed in all Ages, as this concerning the Being of God is known to have done; and we shall find, that they all conspire manifestly to prove the Truth and Certainty of the Thing so generally believed: For that all Sorts of Men, so distant from each other, both in Time and Place, so different in Manners and Customs, so disagreeing in their Sentiments and Opinions about all other Matters, and so opposite in their Interests, should thus constantly concur in one fundamental Opinion, upon which, notwithstanding they have raised such contradictory Superstructures, must necessarily prove, that they all have it from some common Original, antecedent in Nature to all the Notions or Opinions in which they differ.

Now the several Ways, by which this Universality of Belief can be sufficiently accounted for, may be reduced to these three that follow:

First, This general Concurrence in the Acknowledgment of a Deity, may proceed from some common Instruction, conveyed down from one to another, from the very Beginning of Mankind; and by that means derived into the several Ages and Nations of Men. Or,

Secondly, It may, in some measure, arise from the natural Frame or Make of every Man's Mind, disposing him clearly to apprehend the Truth and Certainty of it, upon the first proposing. Or,

Thirdly, It may be discovered as a plain and necessary Conclusion, deducible, by common Principles of Reason, from what is obvious to the Sense and Experience of every considerate Man, who will but attend to those Effects of Power, Wisdom and Goodness, which daily present themselves to him.

It is not necessary to assign any one of these three Grounds of Persuasion, exclusively of the rest, for this universal Consent of Mankind, in the Matter of which we are now speaking; because we may be fully satisfied, that each of them have their Share, either in producing, or continuing, or confirming, this general Belief among Men; and each of them, duly considered, is a strong Evidence for the Truth of what is intended to be proved by them: Neither do they at all interfere with one another: for though, according to Men's different Ways of Reasoning, one of them may appear more convincing to one Man, and another to another, according as different Men turn their Attention more to one than to another; yet the asserting of one, does not in the least weaken the Force of the other.

THE Apostle here in the Text, seems principally to insist upon the last Ground *Leng.* of Belief, *viz.* That of natural Reasoning from the manifest Works of God; *SERM.* because he is speaking of those, who professing themselves wise, or assuming the *VI.* Name of Philosophers, yet became Fools, in this Practice of abominable Idolatry, as well as the more ignorant Vulgar: they became vain in their Imaginations or Reasonings, while they worshipped the Creature; which, if they had reasoned justly and carefully, would rather have led them to the Acknowledgment and Adoration of the Creator; or would have kept up that original Notion of God, which the less inquisitive Part of Mankind had, for a long time, delivered down from one to another. But yet, by this Reasoning from the Works of God, he does by no means intend to set aside, but rather confirms all the other Ways, whereby the Knowledge of God is conveyed to Mankind: And therefore we may consider each of them separately. And,

First, If we suppose this general Concurrence, in the Acknowledgment of a Deity, to have proceeded from some common Instruction or Institution at first, and so to have been conveyed down, from one Age to another, by Tradition; This will necessarily lead us to the first Original of Mankind, and so make it highly credible, that they all, at first, sprung from one common Stock. For, as I have ^bformerly observed, no particular Age or Nation can be assigned, since Mankind was far spread over the Earth, for the Beginning of such a Tradition, which has been shewn to be much older than all the particular Pretenders to it: and therefore, the very first Men must have been some way or other instructed in it. And who can reasonably be supposed to be their Master or Instructor, but God himself; who first gave them their Being, and who might, by some Discovery of himself to them, shew them, that to him they owed their Being? It is not unreasonable to suppose, that God might make a very plain and particular Revelation of himself at first, which, while Men attended to, they could not easily mistake: Or even supposing them to have had but the same Degree of Reason and Understanding, that Men, who are come to Years of Discretion, now have, they could not easily be either ignorant of, or unconcerned about, their own Original; it being the most natural Enquiry, that Men newly come into Being can be supposed to make. Nor is it likely, that they should impute their Being to a false Cause, when the true one was so very near them; they being but the very first remove from it: And when they saw their own Offspring, they would, no doubt, be careful to tell them the same Truth: For it cannot well be conceived, that the first Parents of Mankind, when they were so lately brought into Being, should designedly go about to put a Cheat upon all their Posterity, concerning their own Original.

AND this gives a reasonable Account, how this general Persuasion of the Being of God, the Maker of all Things, might be propagated through all Generations and Countries. And that it really was so, there are divers very considerable Arguments to persuade us; which, though they be not each of them, when taken separately, sufficient to silence all the Objections of such Men as are disposed to cavil; yet, when they are impartially compared together, they will abundantly satisfy any reasonable and unprejudiced Man. And,

1. It is observable, that before the arising of the several Sects of contending Philosophers, it was a general Tradition, that the World itself was made by God. This is evident from all the ancient Poets, who have said any thing about the Original of Things, either designedly at large, or only by way of Episode; as is well known to all that read their Writings. And by the Manner in which the Poets, that are now extant, introduce their Theology, we may see that it was the traditional Doctrine of Poets yet more ancient. And there is no doubt but that the first Poets and Philosophers too, set up upon the Stock of Tradition, though, as the World grew older, they found out different Ways of embellishing, and by that means, of gradually corrupting the ancient Doctrine. And as the Practice of

^b See *SERM.* IV. and V.

Leng. the World grew on by degrees to more Kinds of Idolatry, so the original Tradition
 SERM. grew daily more and more debased; but yet so that some Lines of primitive
 VI. Truth were preserved under all these Disguises. ^c *Aristotle* owns, that all the An-
 cients believed the World was made, though they differed much about the Man-
 ner of its Production. And indeed, when they began to philosophize about it,
 and to desert the ancient Tradition, they were greatly divided in their Opinions;
 and the Love of Disputation, and the Desire of saying something new, and dif-
 ferent from others, led them still into greater Diversity of Opinion: but still the
 most considerate of them saw a Necessity of admitting an infinite Mind for the
 first active Cause of all Things. And ^d *Aristotle* asserts, that *they who affirmed in*
former Times, that Mind or Understanding was the Cause of the World and of all
Order, spoke like Men awake and in their Senses, among such as talked at random.
 For that all Things came together by Chance, or that the present Frame of the
 World hath been from Eternity, or without Cause, were, in comparison, very
 novel as well as unreasonable Doctrines, and the Maintainers of each could easily
 see the Absurdity of the other.

2. As to the Manner in which the World was produced, there are some Re-
 liques of old Tradition scattered up and down anciently in most Countries, though
 dressed up in the Guise of Fable and Allegory, suitable to the Genius of particular
 Times or Nations. Hence the Stories of the ancient *Chaos*, of *Night* being the
 Mother of *Day*, or *Darkness* preceding *Light*: ^e of *Water* being the first mate-
 rial Principle out of which God made all Things, which was the Doctrine of
Thales, but not his own Invention: For though *Aristotle* endeavours to make
 him the first Broacher of this Opinion, and to shew from what Considerations he
 might be led into it, yet he grants, that ^f "there were some who affirmed, that
 "the most ancient Men, long before that Generation, and even the very first
 "Theologers had the same Notion about the Original of Nature, making *Oceanus*
 "and *Tethys* the Fathers of Generation; and *Water*, that is *Styx* in the Poets
 "Language, the Oath of the Gods, as being the most honourable, because the
 "most ancient." So that after all he is forced to own, that he cannot be certain,
 but that this Opinion might be much older than *Thales*.

3. THAT Mankind sprung all originally from one common Stock, was an
 opinion generally received: and that the first of Mankind received Life, and
 Soul, and Understanding immediately from God, and was made in the Image of
 God, and the like, are Notions which occur very frequently as a common Do-
 ctrine among ancient Authors. And upon this Foundation *Saint Paul* does not
 scruple to argue even with the *Athenian* Philosophers, and to condemn the com-
 mon Practice of Idolatry by it: ^g *God that made the World and all Things there-*
in, — and hath made of one Blood all Nations of Men, for to dwell on all the
Face of the Earth, and hath determined the Times before appointed, and the
Bounds of their Habitation, that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might
feel after him and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in
him we live, and move, and have our Being, as certain also of your own Poets
have said, For we are his Offspring; for which reason, we ought not to think,
that the Deity is like Gold, or Silver, or Stone graven by human Art. All these
 are much below the Nature of Man, and much more below the Nature of him
 who is the Original of all Things, and of whom Man is but the Image or Off-
 spring. This was a Doctrine of which they could not but have some Knowledge
 before, though *Jesus* and the *Resurrection* were things new and strange to
 them.

4. THIS is farther confirmed by the general Practice of almost all Nations, of
 deducing their first Original from some God, to whom they gave special Honour:
 For it being a current Tradition among them all, that Mankind was from God;

^c *Aristot. de Cælo*, lib. 1. cap. 10.

^d *Aristot. Metaph.* lib. 1. cap. 3.

^e *Aquam dixit (Thales) esse initium rerum; Deum autem eam Mentem quæ ex aquâ cuncta fingeret. Cic. de Nat. Deor.* lib. 1. cap. 10.

^f *Ἐπεὶ δὲ τινες οἱ καὶ τὰς παμπάλαιας ἐ πολὺ πρὸ τῆς νῦν γενέσεως καὶ πρώτης διολογήσαντες ἕτως οἶον, ὡς τὸ φύσει ἀγαθόν, &c. Metaph.* lib. 1. cap. 3.

and they themselves being, by Length of Time and Want of Letters, become ignorant of the Manner and Circumstances of their own first planting in such a particular Country, were apt to fancy something like the Original of Mankind to belong particularly to themselves, and to ascribe it to some particular God, after that Kind of Idolatry had taken place in the World: just as later Nations have taken a Fancy to derive their Original from *Trojans*, or some other People, which they think very ancient in History; after they have lost the true Account of their own real Ancestors. Again,

5. IT is evident, that, as all Men generally believed one Supreme God, the first Maker and Father of all Things, whom the Poets call *The Father of Gods and Men*; so they were universally persuaded, that under him, and above Mankind, were divers other Degrees of intermediate Beings, to which they gave the Name of *Gods*, who were under the Government of the Supreme King of the Universe. As *Aristotle* says, *All Men are persuaded, that these Gods are under Kingly Government, because many of themselves now, and others anciently were so governed. And as Men are wont to ascribe to themselves a Likeness to the Gods, as in their Image, so also in their Manner of living.* And that these inferior Gods derived their Being and all their Power from the Supreme God, and that they were his Messengers (or *Angels*) and that some of them did frequently appear to and converse with Men upon special Occasions, and that God had divers Ways of communicating his Will by them, and that they did from him frequently communicate the Knowledge of future Events to Men; are general Opinions, so obvious to any one that reads the ancient Heathen Writers, that they need not be insisted on. And yet it is hardly conceivable, how such Opinions should so universally possess Mankind, if the Ground of them had not been evidently shewn to the first Men, and so from them derived down by Tradition: for it is certain, that they were generally believed, even when there were hardly any real present Facts to support the Credit of them.

6. THAT Mankind was originally in a more innocent and more happy State than now it is; and that the Souls of Men shall live in a Future State; that good Men shall be happy, and wicked Men miserable; that Mankind all, excepting a very few, were once destroyed by a Deluge of Water, for their great Wickedness; and that the Earth shall at last be destroyed by a Conflagration; with divers other Opinions of like Nature, not easily drawn from any Observation obvious to Sense, which are frequently to be met withal as vulgar Opinions in the Writings of the Ancients, may well be ascribed to the same Cause, rather than to any Reasonings of Men; because it is plain, that when Length of Time, and the Mixture of Fable and idle Superstition, had so defaced the Simplicity of the primitive Tradition about divers of them, that the Belief of them begun to be worn out, the Philosophers, who pretended to assert them upon Grounds of Reason, were able to make but few Converts: For though the Grounds they went upon were good in themselves, yet, being above vulgar Apprehensions, they had but little Effect, either in supporting or retrieving the ancient Doctrine.

7. LASTLY, there are several practical Institutions relating to Religious Worship, and designed to keep up the Sense of God and his Providence, both general and particular in the Minds of Men, which have generally prevailed in the World, such as, the offering of Sacrifices, both propitiatory and eucharistical; the offering of First Fruits and Tythes; the setting apart of particular Persons to minister in Things pertaining to God; the appointing of Festivals, making of Vows, invoking the Deity in solemn Appeals or Oaths, and consulting him by Oracles in Cases of Doubt and Difficulty.

THESE and divers other general Usages, some of which cannot be accounted for by natural Light, prevailing as much as if they had been the Result of Nature and Reason (and some perhaps more than if they had been only such) do plainly

^b Πατήρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε.

ⁱ Καὶ τὰς θεὰς ἡ Ἀθ. τὸ πᾶν φασὶ βασιλεύειν ὅτι καὶ αὐταὶ, ὡς καὶ ὁ παῖς ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ, οἱ δὲ ἀρχαῖοι ἱερεῖς αὐτὰς ὡς τὰ ἑδὴ ἰαυτοῖς ἀφομοῖσιν οἱ ἄνθρωποι. ἔτι δὲ τὴν βίαν τῶν θεῶν. *Arist. Polit. lib. 2. cap. 1. in fine.*

imply,

Leng. imply, that there was at first some one common Original from whence they were
 S E R M. derived. And though long Tract of Time, and transplanting into divers Countries,
 VI. separate or contrary Interests of different Families or contending Nations, Mens
 Aptness to mistake one another, the Love of Novelty and Change, the particular
 Designs of crafty Men, and many other Reasons, must needs have greatly altered
 and corrupted the first Institution, or most primitive Doctrine of Religion and the
 Worship of God ; yet still there were such visible Remains of it scattered up and
 down in every Nation, as, being compared with one another, would evidently discover,
 that they all at first sprung from one common Root, and that Mankind in
 the Beginning was instructed by one common Master.

THIS Matter might be in some Measure confirmed by divers Usages, Customs
 and Opinions of a civil, and others of an indifferent Nature, which have generally
 obtained in most Nations of the World, and yet have either but very little or no
 Foundation in Nature, besides ancient and universal Practice, or tacit Agreement to
 follow what was once begun. Of this Kind, some have taken Notice of the Man-
 ner of counting by Decades ; which, though it have a manifest Convenience,
 making it fit to be continued and farther improved, yet it may be doubted, whe-
 ther there be any Thing in Nature leading directly to it, since other Ways have also
 been traditionally followed, though not so universally : The general Agreement in
 the ancient Number and Order, and, near upon, in the same Names of Letters :
 The Composition of Days into Weeks, or Hebdomad, of which the Reason, fetch'd
 from the seven Planets, seems to be an Invention of Idolaters, long after the Thing
 itself was settled in Practice, but the true Reason of it lost : Some Circumstances
 relating to Marriage and Affinity, and to Funerals, and a decent Interment, and
 the like, which I shall not insist upon. I shall but just mention one Thing more
 of this Kind, of which I think neither any Account can be given from the Nature
 of the Thing, nor any Instance to contradict the Universality of its prevailing, and
 that is, the Respect or Preference given to the Right Hand above the Left, which
 as there can be no satisfactory Reason given for it, besides the Usage of the first
 Men, so there being neither Interest nor Convenience to induce Men to change
 it, I make no question but it will always continue.

Now the Result of all that I have said, under this Head, of one original In-
 struction, derived into the several Ages and Nations of Men by Tradition, is this,
 That though all Tradition, by Length of Time and Depravation of Manners, be
 liable to great Variation and Corruption, yet where there appears something in
 it that has always continued in Substance the same, notwithstanding all the Mix-
 tures and Additions which Time and the corrupt Manners of Men have made to
 it, there we may justly suppose, that the first Foundation of it, which has so con-
 tinued, was laid in Truth : And applying this to the fundamental principles of
 Religion, we may well conclude them to be true. And this Ground both *Plato*
 and *Tully*, and other eminent heathen Authors frequently insist upon. But then, if
 some of the Things abovementioned be compared with the first Records of our
 Religion, which justly pretend to be the most ancient Writings in the World, the
 Argument will receive much greater Strength. And it has accordingly been largely
 treated of to very good Purpose by divers excellent Authors, and particularly by
 Bishop *Stillingfleet* in his *Origines Sacrae*. I proceed now to mention,

Secondly, The second Way by which this universal Belief of the first Principles
 of Religion, and more especially of the Being of God, may, in some Measure,
 arise, and that is from the natural Frame and Make of Man's Mind, disposing him
 clearly to apprehend the Truth and Certainty of it upon the first proposing. I do
 not here intend to enter into the Controversy about innate Ideas, or whether our
 Idea of God be innate. Only I must observe, that there are some Truths so very
 obvious to the Mind of Man, upon his first turning his Thoughts towards them,
 that he cannot, without Violence to his own Mind, refuse his assent to them. And
 these coming so readily to be embraced by all Men, without any previous Rea-
 sonings, or any observable Deductions of one Conclusion from another, in the
 Way of Argument, have made some Men believe them innate. And that the No-
 tion

tion of God is of the same Kind with those other Truths, which are thus fancied by some to be originally in the Mind, we have the plain Confession of that Sect of Philosophers, who would very willingly have argued against any Being of God at all, if they could, I mean the Disciples of *Epicurus*; whose Argument is thus represented by *Tully*, in the Person of *Velleius*, (as I formerly observed, Sermon the IVth) *That since the Opinion is founded not upon any Institution, or Custom, or Law, and yet all to a Man agree in it: We must of Necessity believe that there are Gods, because we have implanted, or rather innate Notions of them. And what the Nature of all Men agrees in must necessarily be true: The Existence of God must therefore be acknowledged.*

I WILL not undertake entirely to vindicate this Argument, in the Manner especially as the *Epicureans* made Use of it. All that I would infer from it, is this, that the Thing was so obvious to their Minds, that they could not well either avoid or deny it; and they knew not well how to account for it otherwise than by supposing it innate. But now, though we do not suppose the Notion of God to be innate, in this strict Sense, yet if every Man be naturally disposed to receive it, as soon as it is proposed to his Understanding, if it break in upon his Mind as soon as he comes to the Exercise of his Reason, like Light to the Eyes, as soon as they are open and capable of admiring it, ^k as some ancient Authors have express'd the Nature of it, then it may justly be called natural to the Mind of Man. And that it really is so, we have this plain Evidence, that it is, in Fact, more difficult for a Man to divest himself wholly of this Belief, and to subdue all the Apprehensions of it, than it is to conquer any other of those common Inclinations or Aversions which no Man scruples to call natural.

THERE are two Things, I know, which are by some Thought to be considerable Objections again this Notion of God's Existence being so natural or evident to the Mind of Man as is pretended. One is, that there are in the World some Nations of Men which have no Notions of God or Religion at all. And the other is, the great Wickedness of so many Men, who live so directly contrary to all Sense of God, that they cannot be conceived to have any natural Persuasion of his Being. But now I think neither of these Objections, if fairly considered, are of any great Moment. For,

I. IF we should grant that there are some Clans of Men, as the *Hottentots* for Instance, or some such like People, who are so far sunk into Brutality, that there appears little or no Sign of any Notion of a God or Religion among them, how will this prove, that the Notion of God is not natural to a reasonable Mind? Since it is evident, that they are as void of all other reasonable Notions, which Men seldom scruple to call *natural* in this Sense; and it would be hard to make such Creatures the Standard of human Nature, who have so little of it, besides something of the outward Form. But as little Service as the granting or supposing this Want of all Signs of Religion, in some People, will do, towards proving the Notion of a God not to be natural to Mankind; yet there is no Occasion to grant even this; because, by the most exact Accounts taken from those who lived upon the Spot with these *Hottentots*, and had best Opportunity of knowing their Customs, they do sometimes pray to a Being that dwells above, and offer Sacrifice of Milk, and the best Things they have, with Eyes lifted up to Heaven. And even those Travellers who had not so long Opportunity of observing thus much among them, yet allow, that they have some shew of religious Rejoycing at the New and Full Moon. Now these People are by all allowed to be the most degenerate of the human Species, and to have survived the common Instincts of Humanity: [See *Ovington's Voyage to Surat*, p. 498.] And therefore, as to what some have affirmed of several other People in different Corners of *America*, that have been without any Notion or Belief of God, we have still less Reason to give any Credit to it. Those who make such Relations concerning them, having either been their mortal Enemies, who have said the very worst Things they could think of, to excuse their own inhuman Cruelty towards them; or else mere Strangers among

^k Οὕτω διατεθειμένοι τὰς ψυχὰς πρὸς αὐτὸ, ὥστε οἶμαι πρὸς τὸ φῶς τὰ βλέποντες. *Julian. Orat. 7. ad Heraclium.*
pag. 209.

Leng. them, utterly ignorant both of their Language and Customs, and not very inquisitive into any Thing besides their Gold, or other Treasure, but what appeared at first : And such Persons not finding any Signs of such Religion or Superstition, as themselves had been used to, presently concluded they had none. And should such Sort, either of prejudiced¹ or incurious Travellers, come into some Parts, of even the best Countries of *Europe*, where they understood as little, and did not happen to see any other religious Worship, they might, perhaps, be apt to make the very same Relation of them.

S E R M.
VI.

BUT it is certain, that both the first Discoverers of those Places, who went with less Prejudice, and the most understanding Persons since, who have been conversant among them, and examined them most narrowly, do agree, that they all own a God, or supreme good Being, though they have very different Notions of his Perfections, and of the Manner of worshipping him ; and that most of them also believe a future State, in which the Conditions of good and bad Men will be very different¹.

2. As to the Wickedness of such Numbers of Men in all Countries, who live in Contradiction to any firm and certain Belief of a God, which is urged as an Argument, that the Notion of him is not so natural as is pretended, I think it may be truly replied, that Men's thus holding the Truth in Unrighteousness, is rather an Evidence, that some Notion of that Truth is natural. For if they, whose Practice makes it their Interest that there should be no God, and who are forced to labour hard, to shut their Eyes against all the Consequences of believing, can yet seldom be able to bring themselves to hold out in denying him ; 'tis a Sign the Light strikes strong upon them, even while they seek to shut it out : The Notion is so natural that they cannot get rid of it, but that it will be returning upon them, let them do what they can to prevent it ; inasmuch, that they find out the most absurd Ways of corrupting the natural Notion of God by Superstition, because they cannot quite discard it ; and yet are unwilling to part with the Pleasures of Sin, as they ought, if they would pursue the just Consequences of it. I cannot, indeed, call these Men properly Believers in a religious Sense, but they are certainly in the Number of those who profess to know God, though in Works they deny him : And they shew how difficult it is to oppose, and how extravagant and unreasonable to deny a Truth, which our own Nature will every Day remind us of. It is like going against a natural Instinct, which to all other Creatures is esteemed a certain Guide. And if we would be led by this Judgment of Nature, which the Consent of all Ages has, in Effect, vouched to be such, we need not fear mistaking, if we determine Man to be naturally a religious as well as reasonable Creature.

¹ See this Matter made out from good Authority by Bishop Stillingfleet, in his new Part of his Orig. Sac. book 1. chap. 1. p. 73.

S E R M O N VII.

Preached October the 7th, 1717.

R O M. i. 19, 20, 21.

Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God hath shewed it unto them :

For the invisible Things of Him, from the Creation of the World, are clearly seen, being understood by the Things that are made, even His eternal Power and Godhead ; so that they are without Excuse.

Because that when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, &c.

THERE are, as I hinted in my last Discourse, two Things evidently asserted by the Apostle, in these Words, which are both of them directly contrary to those Pretences, with which atheistical Men endeavour to screen themselves from the Terrors of Religion :

Leng.
SERM.
VII.
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ONE is, *That God has, from the Beginning of the World, given sufficient Manifestations of his own eternal Power and Godhead to Mankind, by his Works, or by what he has plainly done, and still continues to do in the World :*

THE other is, *That Men having sufficient Means of knowing God, if they either disown, or take no Notice of his Being ; if they neither glorify him as God, nor shew any Gratitude towards him, they become thereby utterly inexcusable, and will therefore certainly fall under his just Indignation for their Neglect of him.*

THE first of these Assertions is what I am now upon ; and have, in some Part, before spoken to ; in shewing upon what Foundation the general Belief or Persuasion of the Being of God is built, or from what Original it proceeds.

Two Grounds of this I have already considered, viz.

First, SOME common Instruction at the first, conveyed down from one to another, from the very Beginning of Mankind, and by that Means derived into the several Ages and Nations of Men : And,

Secondly, THE natural Frame or Make of every Man's Mind, disposing him clearly to apprehend the Truth and Certainty of it, upon the first proposing.

AND from these two impartially considered, I hope it will appear that so universal a Consent of Mankind ought not to be despised as a Thing ill grounded ; but that we may justly reckon it, (as Tully calls it, *a Law of Nature* : Not an uncertain Opinion founded upon Fiction, but one of those Judgments or Determi-

^a Cic. Tusc. l. 1 cap. 13.

Leng. nations of Nature ^b which cannot be destroyed but confirmed by Length of Time
 S E R M. and Observation of the Nature of Things. I proceed therefore to the

VII.

Third Ground of this universal Persuasion of the Being of God, *viz.* The common principle of Reason deducing this, as a plain and necessary Consequence or Conclusion from the Observation of those visible Effects of Power, Wisdom and Goodness, which are obvious to every considerate Man, who will but attend to them.

I do not suppose, that this is the Way by which the Generality of Men first come to their Notion of a Deity, for that is certainly to be attributed rather to the two foregoing Grounds. But that which confirms and improves this Notion, in those that are already prepossessed with it by Tradition, or the natural working of their own Mind, that which gives them entire Satisfaction about the Truth and Certainty of it, when any Doubts arise about those former Impressions, is the serious Consideration of the mighty Works of Providence, which they cannot help observing when they turn their Eyes towards the visible World. To this Purpose Tully, in the Person of Balbus, commends an Observation of Aristotle's ^c, which is to this Effect: Suppose, says he, there were some Men who had always lived under Ground, though in convenient and noble Apartments, finely adorned and furnished with all such Accomodations as tend to make the Life of Man easy in such a Condition; but yet had never at any Time come from under the Earth, but had only heard of a Deity, or Divine Power, by Report: Now suppose that these same subterraneous Men should some Time after, by the opening of the Earth, come out of their hidden Regions into this habitable World, and be surprized with a clear View of the Earth, and the Sea, and the Heavens, and should observe the Vastness of the Clouds, and the Force of Winds; and seeing the Sun, should consider its Magnitude, Splendour and prodigious Influence; how it makes Day, by diffusing its Light through the whole Heaven: And when the Night shades the Earth, imagine them to behold the whole Heaven adorned with Stars of different Magnitudes, and the various Phases of the Moon, and to observe the constant, regular, and perpetual Motion of all the heavenly Bodies: When they have seen and considered all these Things, they would undoubtedly conclude, that there is a Deity, and that all these great and stupendious Things are his Workmanship. Thus, in the Opinion of Aristotle, this would be a very natural way of arguing. And he is by no Means singular in his Judgment of the Matter; since all other, even heathen Writers, both before and after him, who have in earnest endeavoured to persuade Men of the Being of a God and a Providence, have ever looked upon this as a very convincing Argument: And Tully particularly, from whom we have the forementioned Passage of Aristotle, is very copious upon this Subject, where he designedly treats of it in the Person of a Stoic, and thinks that ^d Philosophers, what rude Apprehensions soever they might have upon the first imperfect View of the World, yet when they come to observe the determinate and uniform Motions of it, and how all are governed by stated Laws, in unchangeable Order and constant Regularity, ought to understand that there is not only some understanding Inhabitant in this heavenly and divine Fabrick, but also a Ruler, Governor, and Architect, of so great and admirable a Work. And he says, that they are so far from being worthy of the Character of Philosophers, ^e that they do not deserve the Name of Men, (or rational Creatures) who, when they see the constant Motion of the Heavens, and the established Order of the Stars, and all Things so corresponding with and depend-

^b Opinionum commenta delet dies, naturæ judicia confirmat. Balb. apud Cic. de Nat. Deor. l. 2. cap. 2.

^c Præclarè ergo Aristoteles, si essent, inquit, qui sub terrâ semper habitavissent, &c. Vide Cicer. de Nat. Deor. lib. 2. cap. 37.

^d — Sic philosophi debuerunt si forte eos primus aspectus mundi conturbaverat, postea cùm vidissent motus ejus finitos & æquabiles, omniaque ratis ordinibus moderata, immutabilique constantia, intelligere inesse aliquem non solum habitatorem in hac cœlesti ac divinâ Domo, sed etiam rectorem, moderatorem & tanquam architectum tanti operis, tantique muneris. Cic. de Nat. Deor. l. 2. cap. 35.

^e Quis enim hunc hominem dixerit, qui, cùm tam certos cœli motus, tam ratos astrorum ordines, tamque omnia inter se connexa & apta viderit, neget in his ullam esse rationem; eaque casu fieri dicat quæ, quanto consilio gerantur, nullo consilio assequi possumus? Ib. cap. 38.

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ing upon each other in such an admirable Harmony, should yet deny that there is *Leng.*
Reason and wise Design in them; or should imagine that such great Things *SERM.*
were made by Chance, which shew a Wisdom so vastly superior to all that we can *VII.*
exert in the Discovery of them. And in divers other Places of his Writings, where
he mentions this occasionally, as his own Argument, he insists upon it as what
no Man of common Sense can reasonably contradict ^f. And, indeed, when the
Question is, Whether all Things exist in such a Manner as they do, by mere Chance,
or by virtue of a superintending Mind, infinitely wise and good and powerful, the
proper Way of determining it is to appeal to the Things themselves, and to see
what Characters of Wisdom, Goodness and Power they evidently bear; and if the
more curiously we search into them, and the more attentively we observe them, we
find these Marks and Signatures still more and clearer in every one of them, it must
needs so much the more weaken all our Suspicions of Chance having any Hand
in them, and so much more confirm our Belief or Opinion of a wise and good and
powerful Being presiding over them, and directing all their Motions. ^g When we
see any fine Piece of Movement, as a Sphere or a Clock, or any other curious Ma-
chine, we make no Scruple to say, that it is the Work of Reason and Art, though
we see not the Artist: And when we behold the admirable Motions of the heavenly
Bodies, of which all other Movements are but a faint Copy, and consider with what
Regularity and Uniformity their constant Revolutions are performed, through so
many Ages, without any Mistake or Failure, without any Disorder or Impediment
to each other, notwithstanding their vast Bulk, and prodigious Swiftneſs; can we
doubt, whether they be contrived, governed and directed, by a most excellent and
divine Reason? And as this will naturally excite our Admiration of that Supreme
Being, whose Power and Wisdom manages all Things; so in Reason it ought to
create in us the highest Veneration for him, and the strongest Sense of Gratitude
towards him, when we are made Partakers of so much Good from these Works
of his. It is therefore with good Reason that the Apostle (here in the Text) lays
so great Stress upon this Argument from the Frame of the World; and declares
those Men, in the mere Light of Nature inexcusable, who having such Means of
knowing God, yet did not glorify him as God, nor shewed themselves thankful to
him; because, by their own Confession, every Part of the Creation proclaims a
Wisdom and Power in its Author, so much above all possible Productions of
Chance, that it infinitely exceeds, even the most exalted human Understanding,
perfectly to comprehend it. And by the like Confession, ^h *all the Parts of the*
World are so well constituted that they could neither be more convenient for Use,
nor more beautiful for Shew than they are. And therefore some of them have
owned, ⁱ *that he ought not to be counted for a Man who is not moved to Gratitude*
by the beautiful Order of the Stars, by the pleasing Vicissitude of Day and Night,
by the grateful Mixture and Contemperation of the Seasons, and by all those Things
which are so bountifully produced for our Use and Benefit. So that this Argument
drawn from the Order of the World, and the several Parts of it, does, to the
common Apprehension of Mankind, not merely prove the Being of a God, but
likewise shews what Kind of Being he is by demonstrating these his principal At-
tributes of Power, Wisdom and Goodness, which are the Foundation of all natu-
ral Religion; the Want or Abuse of which the Apostle so severely charges upon
the Heathen World in this Chapter. And the due Improvement of this Argu-
ment, is a proper Employment for the Minds of all speculative Men, who are in-
quisitive into the Works of Nature which are a Subject that will never be ex-
hausted, but the more they are searched into, the greater Matter they will al-

^f Quid est enim verius quàm neminem esse oportere tam stultè arrogantem, ut in se mentem & rationem putet in-
esse, in cœlo mundoque non putet? aut ea, quæ vix summa ingenii ratione comprehendat, nullâ ratione moveri putet?
Ib. 2. de Legg.

^g An cum machinatione quadam moveri aliquid videmus, ut sphæram, ut horas, ut alia permulta; non dubitamus
quin illa opera sint rationis? cum autem impetum cœli, &c. *Cic. de N. D. lib. 2. c. 38.*

^h Quod si omnes mundi partes ita constitutæ sunt, ut neque ad usum meliores potuerint esse, neque ad speciem
pulchriores, videamus utrùm ea fortuita sint, &c. *Cic. de Nat. D. l. 2. cap. 34.*

ⁱ Quem verò astrorum ordines, quem dierum noctiumque vicissitudines, quem mensium temperatio, quemque ea
quæ gignuntur nobis ad fruendum, non gratum esse cogant, hunc hominem omnino numerare qui decet? *Cic. de*
Legg. l. 2.

Leng. ways gradually afford for Admiration and Praise of the infinite Perfections of their
 SERM. Author.

VII.

But because my intended Method will not allow me to pursue this Argument at large, through all the several Branches of it, there being no Part of the Creation which does not, when viewed in a proper Light, afford ample Matter for the Proof and Illustration of a divine Wisdom presiding over it; and because there are already many excellent Treatises upon this Subject, made by Persons of great Ability in natural and experimental Knowledge, which, no doubt, will be constantly encreasing; I shall, at present, chuse to mention only some such general Considerations as may be most easily applied to those Observations which almost any Man of common Capacity, with a moderate Attention, may make for himself.

Now if we consider, either the stupendous Magnitude and Extent of the whole Creation; or the prodigious Number and Variety of Creatures contained in it; or the exquisite Minuteness of the several Parts of which they consist; or the Beauty, Order and Regularity of every distinct Species; or the harmonious Correspondence of each Part of Nature to the other, even in the inanimate Part of the World; or if we contemplate the curious Structure of so many vastly different Sorts of Animals, and how exactly they are all fitted to their several States and Conditions of Life, and what Provision is made for the Preservation and Continuance of their several Kinds; or, lastly, if we consider Man, the principal Inhabitant of this visible Part of the World, which falls most within our Notice, we shall evidently perceive such manifest Tokens of infinite Power, Wisdom and Goodness, as cannot be ascribed to any Thing but a Providence, or a Mind, infinitely perfect in all these Attributes.

1. If we consider the amazing Magnitude and Extent of the whole Creation, it gives us a Notion of Power incomprehensible in the Production and Preservation of it. We cannot say, indeed, that the Creation is, properly and strictly speaking, infinite, or without all possible Bounds, but only that the Limits of it are to us, or perhaps to any created Mind, unsearchable. Its Extent is beyond all the Power of Sight which we have or can have from the Assistance of the best Telescopes. The Distance from the Earth to the Sun is prodigiously greater than perhaps any Man, who is not something acquainted with astronomical Speculations, would easily conceive^k. And yet, how vast soever this Distance is, it is very inconsiderable in Comparison of the Distance of the fix'd Stars, which are visible to our naked Eye; and yet more so in Comparison of those which are so remote as not to be seen without the best Glasses: And how many more there may be, which by Reason of their vastly greater Distance are invisible, we cannot guess, though we have Reason to believe them to be an inconceivable Number. And these being all supposed like Suns to so many several Systems of other Planets attending them, must require such an immense Space for their several Revolutions, without interfering with one another, as is almost beyond all human Conception to imagine. And then,

2. If we consider the prodigious Number and Variety of Creatures contained in this immense Space, it shews a Wisdom and Contrivance equal to that infinite Power which produced them. If we view only this Earth, with which we are best acquainted, as having the nearest Means of knowing it, which is but a Point, as it were, in Comparison of the Universe, what an amazing Variety does it afford us? Under the Earth, how many Kinds of Fossils, Stones, Gems, Minerals, Metals? Upon the Surface what an incredible Number of Vegetables, Trees, Plants, Shrubs, Grasses, with their several distinct Seeds, Leaves, Flowers and Fruits? Upon the Earth, in the Water, and in the Air, how many Thousand Sorts or Tribes of Animals of different Bulk and Figure, Beasts, Reptils, Birds and Insects? And if the various Kinds are so many, how numberless are the Individuals of each Kind? It might also be observed, that there is a wonderful Variety among the Individuals themselves of the same Species. Even in several Nations of Mankind only there is

^k Being according to the most exact Calculation, 21600 Semidiameters of the Earth, i. e. above 86 Millions of English Miles 86,051,398. Durham's *Astro-Theology*.

such an incredible Diversity, as to Colour, Statute, Language, and the like, as made *Long.* even¹ *Pliny* himself say, that *the Power and Majesty of Nature, in every particular Instance, is beyond all Belief to a Man that only considers some Parts, and has not a View of the Whole in his Mind.* And a little after, he instances in that^m inimitable Variety in the Faces of Men, of which not one of so many Thousands is so like another as not to be easily distinguished. If we extend our Views and Thoughts farther, and consider that the Number of fixed Stars, especially since the Improvement of Telescopes, is not so much as pretended to be guessed at; and that the Planets about them may be replenished with Creatures both animate and inanimate, as different in Kind, as they are distant in Place, from those with which we are acquainted, is very probable; and there may be as many more Kinds of them, and as many more Individuals of each Kind as the Places they are lodged in will contain: What an astonishing Multiplication of their Numbers and Variety will this then amount to? 'Tis here the Excess of Power and Wisdom, so infinitely beyond our Capacity, and not the Want of it, which dazzles our Understanding; as the excessive Light of the Sun blinds our Eyes. But,

3. ON the other Hand, if we pry into the exquisite Minuteness of the several Parts of which each distinct Creature, either animate or inanimate, is composed, this will still heighten our Admiration of the infinite Skill of the Artificer who framed them. There are Millions of entire and perfect Animals, endued with Life and Motion, so very small that they cannot easily be discerned by the naked Eye; which yet, by the help of Microscopes, are discovered to have their several organical Parts as curiously framed and fitted to their several Motions and Uses, as those of a much larger Size: And how surprizingly small must those Parts be, singly taken, when a compounded Body, made up of so great Number, is hardly big enough to be visible? The like may be said for the fine Texture of the minute Parts of larger Animals, and even of Plants and all other distinct Kinds of Vegetables, of which the first *Stamina* are so small as to be imperceptible to our unassisted Senses. And even the more simple and seemingly less compounded Bodies, of how infinitely small Particles do they consist? Who can by his Senses discover the Figure of the constituent Parts of Fluids, which yet are not so closely united but that there is much Vacuity between them? Who can discern the Texture of the Parts of Water, which makes it so difficult to be compressed by any human Force? Or, who ever saw the Figure of the Particles of Air or Wind? Which, though compressible, yet how great is their Force of Resistance? So that the *Minima Naturæ* are as much beyond our Capacities to discover, as the Magnitude of the Universe. What an infinite Wisdom then must it be, how intense as well as extensive, which at once so intimately reaches, and so accurately manages both these Extremes? For.

4. IF we consider the Beauty, Order and Regularity of every distinct Species of Things, the Accuracy of the divine Artificer will still farther appear. Though the Number of his Works be so incomprehensibly great, and their Kinds so various, yet each of them singly is directed, performed and finished with as much Skill and Exactness as if it were the only Thing attended to. Every one of the Particulars is wrought with more Art and Curiosity than any human Artist, though he were to spend all his Time and Pains upon it, can attain to imitate. What our blessed Saviour says of the Flowers of the Field, that *even Solomon in all his Glory was not arrayed like one of these*, is no hyperbolic Expression. The most curious polishing, gilding or painting of human Art, cannot vie with that of some small Insects, Seeds and Flowers. An excellent Author, well skilled in these Matters, has told us, thatⁿ *the Observations which have been made in these latter Times, by the help of the Microscope, discover a vast Difference between natural and artificial Things. Whatever is natural and beheld through that, appears exquisitely formed and*

¹ *Naturæ verò rerum vis atque majestas in omnibus momentis fide caret; si quis modò partes ejus ac non totam complectatur Animo. Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. 7. cap. 1.*

^m Jam in facie vultuque nostro, cum sint decem, aut paulò plura membra, nullas duas in tot millibus hominum indiscretas effigies existere: Quod ars nulla in paucis numero præstet affectando.

ⁿ *Bp. Wilkins of Nat. Rel. lib. 1. ch. 6.*

Leng. adorned with all imaginable Elegancy and Beauty. There are such inimitable
 S E R M. *Gildings and Embroideries in the smallest Seeds of Plants, but especially in the*
 VII. *Parts of Animals, in the Head or Eye of a small Fly; such Accuracy, Order,*
 ~~~~~ *and Symmetry in the Frame of the most minute Creatures, a Louse, for example,*  
*or a Mite, as no Man were able to conceive without seeing of them: Whereas the*  
*most curious Works of Art, the sharpest finest Needle doth appear as a blunt rough*  
*Bar of Iron coming from the Furnace or the Forge. The most accurate Engravings*  
*or Embossments seem such rude, bungling, deformed Works, as if they had been*  
*done by a Mattock or a Trowel: So vast a Difference is there between the Skill of*  
*Nature, and the Rudeness and Imperfection of Art. Nor is the Order, Regularity,*  
*and Proportion, constantly observed in the several Parts of the visible Creation,*  
*less to be admired than the Beauty and Elegance of each of them. That so many*  
*Degrees of Creatures, animate and inanimate, should be always constantly kept*  
*in their proper Rank, so that they appear to be the same through all Genera-*  
*tions, notwithstanding every thing is in some sort of perpetual Motion, is utterly*  
*repugnant to the Nature of Chance; and must argue a wise Director, that orders*  
*all Things in Number, Weight, and Measure. Again,*

5. THE harmonious Correspondence of each Part of Nature to other, shews a comprehensive Wisdom, that has one entire View of all Things at once, such a Skill as has no Occasion to mend or new model one Part of its Work, to make it fit for another; but which makes both great and small Parts answer one another so exactly, that notwithstanding all the multifarious Motions, and Directions of Motion, in the World, there is no Disorder or Disturbance created thereby in the whole; but every Part, and every Motion of that Part, is as well preserved, as if all the rest had been particularly designed for that only. And though we can never be able to discover all the Uses and Designs, for which every particular Part of the Creation was made, or to which it serves; yet from what we can discover, we may reasonably conclude, that every Part has its Use in the whole, and that every Thing is wisely suited to some excellent Purpose or other, though we cannot find it out. An unskilful Man, that transiently looks upon some curious Engine, consisting of many fine Parts and intricate Motions of great Variety, cannot readily discern to what Use every particular Wheel or Pin serves; yet if he sees the general Use of the whole, he would be esteemed a Fool indeed, if he should immediately conclude, that this or that Part had no Use at all, because he could not presently discover to what End it served. So for us to pretend, to know all the Uses for which every particular Part of the Creation was made, or to which it may be applied, is great Arrogance, proceeding from Want of Experience: To think they were designed for no Use, is a Weakness easily confuted by those who have more Skill: and to deny that Things were designed for those Uses, to which we see them always constantly answer, is as manifestly unreasonable, and argues very narrow Conceptions of the Divine Knowledge and Design; as if he could not intend Things for the Uses we do know, because he designed them for more than we know: For this must be the Result of their Reasonings, who forbid us to take notice of, or enquire after, final Causes. But many Relations and Correspondences of Things we can evidently see, being more nearly concerned in them, and consequently may know some of their obvious and manifest Uses for which they were made: As for instance, We can perceive a manifest Fitness in the Organs of Sensation, of every Animal, to those *Objects* with which it has occasion to converse, and to the *Medium*, through which it is to perceive them, in such a manner as conduces most to its Preservation. Thus the *Eye*, and visible *Objects*, and *Light*, by which those *Objects* are seen, have such a mutual respect to each other, that, if any one were wanting, the other would be imperfect or useless. And the like may be said of the *Ear* and *Sounds*, and the *Undulation* of *Air* by which those *Sounds* are conveyed: And so for the other Senses, and their respective *Objects*. And thus in every Part of Nature, which we have any tolerable acquaintance withal; even from the vast heavenly Bodies, as the Sun, Moon, and Planets, down to the smallest Insect upon our Earth, we may observe one Thing suited to another, with the most exact Congruity: So that



we may say, all Nature is but one mighty Work of one Almighty and All-wise Architect. Leng.

BUT then that there is a Goodness, as well as Wisdom and Power, shewn in the Formation of all Things, does more evidently appear from the Animal and Rational Part of the World, from those Things which, being endued with Sensation, are thereby capable of Pleasure and Satisfaction; as all the Creatures, which have animal Life, are in some degree: For they all rejoice in, and are well pleased with their Being. And therefore, S E R M.  
VII.

6. IF we contemplate the curious Structure of so many different Species of Animals, and observe how exactly they are all fitted in their very outward Make and Figure, as well as inward Dispositions and Instincts, to their several respective States and Conditions of Life; and what suitable Provision is made for their Satisfaction, as well as for the Preservation, Continuance, and Propagation of their several Kinds, we cannot easily forbear to admire the Bounty as well as Wisdom of Providence appearing therein. I do not here design to enter upon an exact Description, either of the various Kinds of Animals, or the particular Structure of all the several Parts of any one Animal, or so much as to shew the exquisite Formation of any particular Part, much less all the several Uses to which such Parts are made to serve: Such particular Descriptions of Things require a long Discourse, and are much better apprehended by ocular Inspection, than by any Discourse whatever which can be made without it. I can only hint at a few of those Things which are obvious and easy to be observed, but not to be accounted for without a superintending Providence: Such, for Instance, is the Distinction of Sexes in all Animals (that being the Means by which the Species is continued) and the due Proportion of the Numbers of each Sex to the other, which has been constantly kept from the Beginning. This quite destroys all Supposition of spontaneous or equivocal Generation, even in lesser Animals; and shews the Absurdity of imagining that any real Animal, and especially Mankind, could ever be produced by Chance, or a casual Motion and Concourse of Atoms of which they consist. For, not to insist upon the exquisite Formation of all the internal as well as external Parts of each Animal, in which we cannot observe any thing either superfluous or deficient, how is it possible, if they had sprung out of the Earth like Mushrooms, that so nice a Proportion of Sexes should be kept in their first Production, and that they should by natural Instinct know, that they were mutually designed for each other, and that the succeeding Generations were to be produced in a Way so very different from the first? Such, again, is the mighty Care which Animals have of their Young, both to feed and defend them, 'till they are able to shift for themselves: the strange different natural Instincts of various Creatures, and yet, in all of the same Species, constantly the same; each Animal knowing and providing its proper Food, and shunning what is improper: The natural Sense which every Creature has of its own proper Weapon and Defence, and the Way of using it without teaching, as well as of the Enemies it is to secure itself against: The wonderful Sagacity, Diligence, and Application of some Creatures: The admirable Art and Contrivance of some, even very small Animals, in forming their own Places of Habitation or Security with the greatest Exactness. These Things shew, that though they do not direct themselves, yet they are directed by a constant and unerring Wisdom. Again, if we consider the convenient Structure and apt Disposition of the several Parts of the different Kinds of Creatures, as Beasts, Birds, and Fishes; how they are fitted to their several Elements, and the Ways of living in them; so that how different soever their Bulk or Figure be, yet we cannot say, but that each of them is most conveniently adapted to its own Region, and to the procuring that Food which it is to live upon, and to the providing that Security and Defence which is most proper for it; this is an Instance of Wisdom and Foresight constantly suiting proper Means to their respective Ends.

To use the Words of an excellent Author (Dr. Barrow) upon this Occasion: "Thus much is palpably manifest, that each of these so many curious Organs was designed and fitted on purpose to that chief Use or Operation we see it to per-



*Leng.* "form: this of them, to continue the Kind, that, to preserve the *Individuum* :  
 SERM. "this, to discern what is necessary, convenient, or pleasant to the Creature, or  
 VII. "what is dangerous, offensive, or destructive thereto; that, to pursue or em-  
 brace, to decline or shun it: this, to enjoy what is procured of Good; that,  
 "to remove what is hurtful or useless, or to guard from Mischief or Injury.  
 "That each one is furnished with apt Instruments suitable to its particular Needs,  
 "Appetites, Capacities, Stations, is most apparent. Whence could all this pro-  
 "ceed? Whence came all these Parts to be so fashioned and suited, all of them  
 "so necessary, or so convenient, that none, without the Imperfection and the  
 "Prejudice of the Creature, some not without its Destruction, can be wanting?  
 "Who shaped and tempered those hidden subtle Springs of Life, Sense, Imagina-  
 "tion, Memory, Passion? Who impressed on them a Motion so regular and so  
 "durable, which through so many Years, among so many adverse Contingencies  
 "affailing it, is yet so steddily maintained? Can this proceed from giddy Chance  
 "or blind Necessity?" — And again, "All that Grace and Beauty, which so de-  
 "lights our Sense beholding it; all that Correspondence and Symmetry which so  
 "satisfies our Mind considering it, all that Virtue and Energy extending to Per-  
 "formances so great and admirable, must they be ascribed to Causes of no Worth,  
 "and supposed done to no purpose?"

I MIGHT farther take notice more particularly of the exquisite Formation and Disposition of the several Organs of Sensation, as the Eye, the Ear, and the rest; and with what wonderful Contrivance and Nicety they are adapted in every Creature, to their proper Business and Manner of Life: And though they are so curious and of so fine a Structure, yet how well they are guarded against any Thing that may hurt or annoy them. But I forbear to insist upon these Things, both because they have been often handled, in distinct Treatises upon them, to more Advantage; and because the whole Animal Oeconomy is so apparently the Work of Wisdom and Design, that hardly any one has been well acquainted with it, though in other respects not very forward in owning any Sentiments of Religion, but has yet, by the irresistible Evidence of the Thing, been brought to confess a wise Contrivance in it; as *Aristotle*, *Pliny*, *Galen*, and others among the Ancients, and divers others of later Times.

° *Aristotle* not only constantly affirms it as an Axiom, that Nature [and sometimes that God and Nature] does nothing in vain, or without Reason and Design; and that all natural Things<sup>p</sup> are done for some End; and that<sup>q</sup> Nature always does the best that is possible, in as constant a Manner as Art: so that if there be any Evidence of Design in Things artificial, there is the same in Things natural; the End and Means in each being manifestly suited to one another: But in the Introduction to his Treatise, *of the Parts of Animals*, he asserts, <sup>r</sup>that *there is more of Design and Beauty (or Good) in the Works of Nature, than in the Works of Art*. And indeed, he every where lays great Stress upon final Causes, which of necessity suppose a wise Agent: <sup>s</sup>*This, he says, is manifest in those Animals, which work neither by Art, nor Enquiry, nor Learning, nor upon Deliberation: which makes some doubt, whether it be not by a Mind or Understanding, that Spiders and other Insects work: But if we proceed a little farther, there is the same Appearance of final Causes, or a Tendency towards an End or Design, even in Plants; as that the Leaves are made for the Covering of the Fruit, &c.*

° 'Ο ὃ Θεὸς καὶ ἡ φύσις ἐδὲν μάτῳ ποιεῖσιν. *Arist. de Cælo*, lib. 1. cap. 4. 'Η ὃ φύσις ἐδὲν αἰλόγως ἐδὲ μάτῳ ποιεῖ. *Ibid.* lib. 2. cap. 11.

<sup>p</sup> Ἐνεκά τῃ γὰρ ἀπαντα ὑπάρχει τὰ φύσει, ἢ συμπλάμῃ εἶσαι ἢ ἔνεκά τῃ. *De Anima*, lib. 3. cap. 12.

<sup>q</sup> Ἐν τὰ καὶ τέχνῃ ἐνεκά τῃ, δηλονότι καὶ τὰ καὶ φύσιν, ὁμοίως γὰρ ἔχει πρὸς ἄλλα ἐν τοῖς καὶ τέχνῃς ἐν τοῖς καὶ φύσιν, τὰ ὕστερον πρὸς τὰ πρότερον. *Arist. Physic.* lib. 2. cap. 8. where he has much more to this purpose, very well worth observing.

<sup>r</sup> Μάλλον δ' ἐστὶ τὸ ἔνεκα καὶ τὸ καλὸν ἐν τοῖς τὴ φύσεως ἔργοις, ἢ ἐν τοῖς τὴ τέχνης. *De Partib. Anim.* lib. 1. cap. 1.

<sup>s</sup> Μάλιστα δ' φανερόν ἐστι τὴ ζώων τῶν ἄλλων, ἃ ἔτε τέχνη ἔτε ζήτησαν ἢ τε βελούσάμῃ ποιεῖ. διὸ δὲ ἀρεῖσιν τινες πό- τερον ἢ τινι ἄλλῳ ἐργάζοντο οἱ τε ἀρχαῖοι καὶ οἱ μύσηδες ἐν ταῖς τοιαύταις. καὶ μικρὸν δ' ἔτι περὶ τῶν καὶ ἐν τοῖς φύσιν φάνει τὰ συμφέροντα γινώσκοντες πρὸς τὸ τέλος, οἷον τὰ φύλλα ἐνεκά τὴ τῶ κατὰ σκέπη, &c. *Φυσικ. ἀκρωτ.* lib. 2. cap. 8.



\* *Pliny* in most Cases goes upon *Epicurean* Principles, and shews no such Sense of the fundamental Principles of Religion, as *Aristotle* does; and yet even he cannot forbear admiring the wonderful Art and Contrivance of Nature, even in the smallest Animals; and he instances particularly in the Body of a Gnat, which yet, he truly owns, is not the least of any, the exquisite Formation of which he describes with wonderful Elegance. Leng. SERM. VII.

*Galen*, in his Book *De Ufu Partium*, hath such remarkable Observations to this Purpose, that most of those, who have treated upon this Subject, have taken notice of them, as being full of Expressions, acknowledging not only a wonderful Wisdom and Power, but Goodness also, manifest in the Contrivance of the Animal Structure. Even <sup>u</sup> *Mr. Hobbes* himself, who is never suspected of having too elevated or noble Thoughts of Providence, yet confesses, that those who thoroughly consider all the curiously contrived Organs of Generation and Nutrition, and can think they were not ordered and designed to their several Ends and Offices by an understanding Mind, ought to be looked on, as Persons void of all Mind and Understanding themselves.

Now as curious as all this animal Structure is, and as capable as it is of receiving grateful Sensations, by the exquisite Make of so many different Organs, so there is a like Variety of Provision made in Nature, to satisfy every one of them, in a Way suitable to its Capacity; inasmuch as all the inanimate Part of the Creation is fitted to minister to the Preservation, Satisfaction, and Delight of the animate; there being no living Creature so contemptible, but what has ample Provision made for it. Even all the Senses of Animals have Provision made for their grateful Entertainment, and to all such Distances as those Senses will reach. Can the Eye be gratified with seeing, and is there not provided an infinite Variety of Colours and Figures, of Leaves, Flowers, and Fruits, of great Beauty and Delight to be seen; and Light, a pleasant Medium, to see them by? And to Man especially, the Heavenly Bodies, at a prodigious Distance, afford a very entertaining Prospect. And is there not a proper Provision made likewise for the Ear, in that infinite Variety of Sounds, with which Nature abounds? And so for all the Senses, to some or other of which, almost every Thing is contrived to minister something of Comfort and Delight. And on the contrary, how few are the Things, and how easily avoided, that are greatly ungrateful to any one of them? No more than what may seem designed on purpose, to set off those that are grateful to more Advantage, and to give us a more sensible Relish of them. "So many, so plain, and so exactly congruous, (says the forenamed Author) are the Relations of Things here about us to each other, which surely could not otherwise come, than for one admirable Wisdom and Power, conspiring thus to adapt and connect them together; as also from an equal Goodness, declared in all these Things, being squared so fitly for mutual Benefit and Convenience."

METHINKS, when a Man considers this seriously, (and it well becomes every Man to consider it,) he can hardly forbear breaking out in Language like that of the Psalmist, *O Lord, how manifold are thy Works! In Wisdom hast thou made them all, the Earth is full of thy Riches, &c.* Psal. 104. v. 24.

7. LASTLY, If we consider Man, the principal Inhabitant of this lower World, with whom we have most Opportunity of being acquainted, our Notions of these Attributes of God must needs be more strongly impressed upon us; the Evidence for them being, as it were, brought home to ourselves. And whatever has been hitherto hinted at, either of the curious Structure of the Bodies of other Animals, or of the Provision made to preserve and support them, or to please and gratify their natural Sensations, is yet more eminently to be observed in Man, to whom Providence has been bountiful in an higher Degree, as having manifestly designed

\* — Nufquam alibi fpectatiore naturæ rerum artificio. *Plin. Hift. Nat. lib. 11. cap. 1, 2.*

In his tam parvis tamque nullis quæ ratio, quanta vis, quam inextricabilis perfectio? Ubi tot fensus collocavit in culice, & funt alia dictu minora, &c. *Plin. ibid.*

— Cum rerum natura nufquam magis quam in minimis tota fit.

<sup>u</sup> *Hobbes de Homine, cap. 1.*



*Leng.* him for nobler Purposes; and has accordingly distinguished him in Figure from  
 S E R M. the rest of the Creatures, all of which he has, in some measure, made subservient  
 VII. to him: Infomuch, that even \**Pliny* himself owns, that *Nature seems to have*  
 ~~~~~ *produced all other Things for his sake*; though he complains at the same time,  
 as many other Atheistical Persons have both before and since done, of her being
 a cruel *Step-mother* to him, in that he is not so immediately provided with the
 Conveniences of Food and Clothing of his own, as other Creatures are. But this
 Complaint is both ungrateful and absurd: 'tis as if a Prince or a Governour of a
 City should complain, that he has not Time to dress his own Meat, or make his
 own Shoes. 'Tis indeed true, that Man is not by Nature so immediately, and
 without his own Industry, provided with Food and Cloathing of his own, as some
 other Creatures are: But this is no Defect in the Goodness of Providence towards
 him; because he has Reason given him to supply himself in such a Way as he
 likes best, and Ability to make a more ample use of all Things than the rest of
 the Creatures can; so that he has a Power of making almost every Thing in
 Nature minister to his Necessity, Convenience, or Delight. For how plentifully
 is he provided, both from the Earth, the Air, and the Sea, with great Variety,
 for the Support even of his animal Life? Many of the Creatures, which are
 much greater, and stronger, and swifter than he, yet own a plain Submission to
 him; so that he can use them both to ease his own Labour, and satisfy his Ne-
 cessity, and to furnish him with many Kinds of Pleasure and Delight. Of this I
 might say much more, to shew what a convenient reference all this Part of the
 Creation has to Man: By which I do not mean, that nothing has any other de-
 signed Use, but what Man makes of it; for it would be a Diminution to the In-
 finite Wisdom of Providence, to suppose that we see all the Uses to which every
 Thing is designed; but that Things are contrived, with as much Wisdom and
 Goodness towards Man, and as aptly suited to him, as if he had been the Crea-
 ture principally designed to be taken care of: And nothing can hinder us from
 thinking so, but Man's Unworthiness of such infinite Care and Goodness towards
 him.

BUT I intend not so much to consider Man, in respect of his Body and out-
 ward Condition, whereby he is related to the Material World, as in respect of his
 Mind and Reason, by which he is made capable of judging about the rest of the
 Creation, and reflecting upon himself. And of this, together with the Uses that
 ought to be made, both of this and the foregoing Considerations, I intend to
 speak farther in my next Discourse.

* Principium jure tribuetur homini, cujus causâ videtur cuncta alia genuisse natura. *Plin. Nat. Hist. lib. 7. in*
Proœmio.

S E R M O N VIII.

Preached *November* the 4th, 1717.

R O M. i. 19, 20, 21.

Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God hath shewed it unto them :

For the invisible Things of Him, from the Creation of the World, are clearly seen, being understood by the Things that are made, even His eternal Power and Godhead ; so that they are without Excuse.

Because that when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful, &c.

IN my last Discourse upon this Subject I proposed to consider that which I laid down as the *Third* Ground of the universal Belief of the Being of a God and a Providence in all Ages and Nations, *viz.* The common Principles of Reason deducing this Persuasion, as a plain and necessary Consequence or Conclusion, from the Observation of those visible Effects of Power, Wisdom and Goodness, in the Frame of the World, which are obvious to every considerate Man. For though this, as I then observed, be not the Thing, from which the Generality of Mankind draw their first Notions of a Deity, yet it is certainly that by which, when they come to the more free and extensive Use of their Reason, those Notions are both most evidently confirmed, and most usefully improved, in them. For which Reason the Apostle, here in the Text, seems chiefly to point at this as an unexceptionable Ground of Religion, common to all Men ; being what even the *Gentile* Philosophers themselves, who seriously enquired into the Nature of Things, had frequently insisted on as good Evidence ; and therefore could not reasonably refuse to admit the just and necessary Consequences which might be drawn from it.

SOME manifest Instances of an incomprehensible Power, Wisdom and Goodness exerting itself in all the Works of Nature, I have already touched upon, though but briefly ; because, considering the immense Variety of the Subject, which has been more copiously handled by others, both Ancients and Moderns, my designed Method would allow me only to point at such apparent Tokens of an Almighty, Intelligent and Beneficent Being, presiding over all Things, as no Man of common Understanding, with any tolerable Degree of Diligence or Observation can easily avoid taking Notice of : Such as the amazing Magnitude of the whole Creation ; the prodigious Number and Variety of Creatures contained in this immense Space ; the exquisite Minuteness of the several Parts, of which each distinct Creature, either animate or inanimate, is composed ; the Beauty, Order, and Regularity of every distinct Species of Things ; the harmonious Correspondence of each Part of Nature to other ; and more particularly the curious Structure of so many different Species of Animals ; the exquisite Formation of their Parts, and the nice adapting of them to their several Uses ; so that there is nothing either of Superfluity or Defect, but every Thing properly tending to the Preservation, Continuance and Propagation of

Leng. the several Kinds, through all Generations; with a suitable Provision for all their
 S E R M. natural Wants and Desires, so that they can and do all rejoice in their Beings; which
 VIII. shews a Goodness answerable to the Power and Wisdom of the Author of their Be-
 ing. I was in the last Place considering Man, the principal Inhabitant of this
 lower Part of the World, with whom we have the best Opportunity of being most
 intimately acquainted; and in whom, if we were to consider only the visible Re-
 lation which he stands in to this material World about him, we might see an in-
 finite Wisdom and Goodness continually taking Care of him: So that, notwith-
 standing the ancient Objection of the *Epicureans* and others, that he is neither fed
 nor cloathed, nor armed by Nature, in the same ready Manner that some other Crea-
 tures are; yet he has abundantly more and better Use of all these Conveniences
 than those very Creatures which are born with them; and by Virtue of his natu-
 ral Reason and Superiority over the other Creatures, can easily supply himself by their
 Means with whatever he wants, in great Abundance. Is not the Labour of Build-
 ing and Sowing and Planting, and all other Manual Operations, in which we are also
 greatly served, and much of our Pains eased by the other Creatures, abundantly
 recompensed by a more commodious Way of Dwelling, and a more plentiful Va-
 riety of Food and Cloathing procured for us in a Way suitable to our Superiority
 over those Creatures; and by the Exercise of those Powers in which by Nature we do
 excel them? So that what Complaints soever some rash and unthinking Men may
 make of the Disadvantages Mankind lie under, compared with other Creatures, yet,
 I believe, no Man in his Wits would deliberately change his Condition with any of
 those Brutes, whose Happiness he would sometimes be thought so much to envy.
 A Man that seriously and impartially considers this Matter, would wonder to find
 that so stupid as well as ungrateful a Complaint could ever proceed from Men, in
 other Respects of good Discernment, such as *Pliny* and some others. I mention
Pliny particularly, because (both by his Works, and by the Account which his Ne-
 phew gives of him, *lib. 3. epist. 5.*) he appears to have been a Man very studious,
 and of great Industry, and not much addicted to any mere sensual Pleasure; and, by
 Consequence, one who might have known how to distinguish better between the
 Value of those rational Entertainments, which are by Nature so eminently pro-
 vided for Man above other Creatures, and those Conveniences of mere animal Life;
 which though Brutes have without their own Care, yet every Man may have, in
 more Abundance, by the Exercise of such a Care as is rather pleasant than un-
 easy to his Reason; which makes such a Complaint the more unaccountable in
 him, if it were not that where Men quit the Sense of Providence, their Reason also
 often forsakes them. But as for those who are so far sunk into Brutality that they
 have no Notion of any human Happiness but what consists either in the mere Grati-
 fication of their outward Senses, or a perfect Inactivity; such a Complaint from
 them is, I confess, the less to be wondered at. A perfect *Idleness* seems to be the
 darling Principle of the *Epicureans*, upon which they deny all Providence, be-
 cause, according to them, no Being can be happy that has any Thing to do^a. But
 as *Tully*, in the Person of *Cotta*, justly observes, *such a Kind of Argument not only*
destroys the Activity of the divine Nature, but is the ready Way to make Men idle,
and good for nothing^b. And unless it be upon this *idle* Principle no Man can justly
 complain that Nature has made better Provision for other Creatures than she has
 for Man, even in respect of the mere animal Life.

BUT my Design was not so much to consider Man, in respect of his bodily Con-
 veniences, and that outward Condition whereby he is related to the material World,
 as in respect of his Mind and Reason; whereby he is made capable of judging
 about the rest of the Creation, and of reflecting upon himself and his own Actions,
 and considering what his own Nature is in its best Capacity, and whether there be
 any Powers above him to which he may be likewise related. However, by the

^a Nisi quietum nihil beatum — And, Nos autem beatam vitam in animi securitate & in omnium vacatione munerum ponimus. *Cic. de N. D. lib. 1. cap. 20.* And again, *cap. 36.* Profecto Epicurus, quasi pueri delicati, nihil cessatione melius existimat.

^b Hæc oratio non modò Deos spoliât motu & actione divinâ, sed etiam homines inertes efficit, si quidem agens ali-
 quid, ne Deus quidem esse beatus potest. *Ib. cap. 37.*

way, it may not be improper to take Notice of two or three Observations which arise from that Rank or Order which Man bears in the World, in respect of other Creatures. Leng.
S E R M.
VIII.

I. THAT there is a manifest Subordination of one Thing to another, or different Degrees of Perfection in the several Ranks of Creatures one above another, 'till we come to Mankind: From whence Men have been taught by the mere Light of Nature, to conclude that there is something in Man more excellent and valuable than in them, which gives him a natural Dominion over them; and signifies, that they were made for his Use, and designed to serve him. This is not merely a Notion of the *Stoics*, though they insist much upon it, as may be seen from *Tully* and other Writers; but is, before them, laid down by *Aristotle*, as an allowed Principle, that *Plants were made for Animals, and the other Animals for the sake of Man, the tame ones both for Use and Food, the wild ones, if not all, yet at least the greatest part of them for Food and Cloathing, and other Conveniences; and that therefore, if Nature makes nothing imperfect, [or without an End] nor in vain, then she must have made all these Things for Men.*

2. 'Tis observed that there is something in the very outward Structure of Man, which very remarkably distinguishes him from the other Creatures below him; and which, in the Apprehension of some Persons of great Judgment and Penetration, denotes his being chiefly designed for the Exercise of his Reason and Understanding; towards which his erect Posture of Body gives him a particular Advantage. Upon which Account, *Aristotle* himself takes Notice, that *of all Animals Man alone is of an upright Posture, because his Nature and Essence is divine: And the Work or Business of that which is most divine is Understanding and Thinking; but this Work could not be so easily performed, if there were a great Bulk of Body placed above (or incumbent upon) the Seat of Reason and Thinking, for Weight makes the Mind, and the common Seat of Sense or Perception, to be hardly moved, or to perform its Functions with greater Difficulty.* I will not be answerable for the exact Philosophy of this Reason of *Aristotle's*; but however, it shews his Opinion, that the Soul of Man, or that Part of him which reasons, and understands, and thinks, is not mere Body or Matter, but something which moves and actuates the Body to such a Degree, and which is therefore of more Value than the Body, because for the Use and Convenience of it the Body itself was made of such a particular Figure and Situation of Parts. Divers others of the Ancients (as *Balbus* the *Stoic* in *Tully* expresses their Sense) think the Figure of the Body thus designed, that by a more commodious viewing the Heavens, Men might more readily attain to the Knowledge of God; because Men were not made merely to dwell upon the Earth, but from thence to be Spectators of Things above and in the Heavens, a Sight which no other Kind of Animals is concerned withal. Indeed, as to this Reason, it must be owned, that if the mere Ability to view the Heavens, by the natural Situation of the Eye, were all that is intended, there could not be much inferred from it, to the Advantage of Man above all other Creatures, because there are many of them whose Eyes are made as much or more to look upward, as those of Man. But the Position of the Eye in the Head is not the only Thing to be considered, but the natural Elevation of the Head, above all the rest of the Body, whereby this Ability to look upwards at Pleasure, as well as any other Way, is ren-

^c Ἡ μὲν ἐν τοιαύτῃ κτῆσις ὑπ' αὐτῆς φαίνεται τὴ φύσεως δεδομένη πᾶσιν, ὥστε καὶ τὸ πρῶτον γένεσιν οὕτως, ἔγω καὶ τελευτῇσι — Ὡς δὲ ὁμοίως δῆλον ὅτι καὶ γενομένοις οἰκτιρῶν, τὰ τε φυτὰ τῶ ζώων ἐνεκεν εἶναι, καὶ τὰ ἄλλα ζῶα τῶ ἀνθρώπων χάριν τὰ μὲν ἡμεῖς, καὶ ἄλλοι τῶ χερσίν καὶ ἄλλοι τῶ ποσὶν τῶ ἀγγέλων, εἰ μὴ πάντα, ἀλλὰ τάγε πλείστα τῶ τροφῇ καὶ ἄλλῃ βοήθειᾳ ἐνεκεν, ἵνα καὶ ἐοικὸς καὶ ἄλλα ὄργανα γίνῃ) ἐξ αὐτῶν. εἰ δὲ ἡ φύσις μηδὲν μῆτε ἀτελὲς ποιεῖ μῆτε μάλιστα, ἀναγκαῖον τῶ ἀνθρώπων ἐνεκεν αὐτὰ πάντα πεποιημένα τῶ φύσιν. *Aristot. Polit. lib. 1. cap. 8.*

^d Ὁρθὴν μὲν γὰρ εἶναι μόνον τῶ ζώων ἄλλο τὸ τῶ φύσιν αὐτῶ καὶ τὸ εἶσαν εἶναι Θεῶν ἔργον ὃ δὲ θεοτάτης τὴ νοεῖν καὶ φρονεῖν τὸτο δ' εἰ ῥᾶδιον πολεῖν ἢ ἀνθρώπινον ἐπικειμένον σώματι τὸ γὰρ βάρος δυσκίνητον ποιεῖ τῶ ἀλγόνων καὶ τῶ κοινῇ αἰσθησιν. *Aristot. de partib. Animal. l. 4. c. 10.*

^e — Qui (Deus) primum eos humo excitatos, celsos & rectos constituit, ut Deorum cognitionem, cœlum intuentes, capere possent. Sunt enim è terra homines non ut incolæ atque habitatores, sed quasi spectatores superarum rerum atque cœlestium, quarum spectaculum ad nullum aliud genus animantium pertinet. *Cic. de N. D. lib. 2. cap. 56.*

Pronaque cum spectant animalia cœtera terram,
Os homini sublime dedit, cœlumque tueri
Jussit, & erectos ad fœdera tollere vultus, &c.

Leng. der'd more advantageous to Man than to any other Creature. This is that which
 S E R M. makes the Argument good, and in this general Sense, I presume, their Expressions
 VIII. ought to be taken. And therefore *Socrates* in *Xenophon*,^f very justly, as well as
 religiously, makes it an Instance of the Care of Providence, that among
 many other Advantages, *it hath given Man this erect Posture, to enable him to see
 further before him, and better to view the Things above, and to be less subject to
 Injury* : To which we may add, that it enables him to use his *Hands* to many ex-
 cellent Purposes, both of animal and rational Life, which he could not not do if
 he had only *Feet* instead of them.

3. It may be farther observed, that of all visible Creatures, Mankind alone has
 the Benefit of Speech, or the Power of communicating his Thoughts by articulate
 Sounds, framed and modelled according to his own Discretion. Other Creatures
 have Tongues, which serve them for the same animal Uses that the Tongue of Man
 serves him for. But this Use of the Tongue they have not, nor any other Ability
 of making significant Sounds, except only in so low a Degree as merely to signify
 some pressing natural Appetite, or present Passion of Joy or Grief, resulting from
 immediate Sensation of Pleasure or Pain. But in Man the Tongue and other Or-
 gans of Speech, besides their other Uses in animal Life, are evidently designed for
 the Communication of Reason and Thought from one Man to another, and so
 have a plain Reference to an higher Principle within, which is entirely distinct
 from mere animal Life.

FROM these Observations, and divers others of like Sort, which might be added
 if it were necessary, which are frequently to be met with even in *Heathen* Wri-
 ters, I think we may very fairly draw this Conclusion, That the same Wisdom,
 Power, and Goodness, which is so manifest in the visible World, does likewise
 extend itself to Things invisible; or that our Souls or Minds, and whatever other
 superior Beings there may be, are not less the Production of some wise and good
 and powerful Being, than our Bodies and the Bodies of other Animals, or the
 Things of an inferior Degree. For since there is in Nature a manifest and regular
 Subordination of one Thing to another, or a gradual Progression from Things per-
 fectly inanimate to Things that have vegetative Life, and from thence to Animals of
 different Degrees of Excellence, and from them to Man; and since there is in
 Man an evident Relation of his outward or bodily Fabrick, to the use of something
 in him which reasons and reflects and uses the Body, to many Purposes, as its In-
 strument, and shews its own Being by performing visible Effects upon the Body,
 though itself be invisible; and since all these several Ranks of Things tend upwards,
 and each of them, as it were, point at something above them, to which they own
 a Subjection, at least in Point of Excellence; it is but reasonable from thence to
 suppose that Man which is of this compound Nature, made up of something vi-
 sible and something invisible, is, in respect of his Mind and Reason, as much re-
 lated to something above him, as he is, in respect of his Body, related to the Crea-
 tures below him. And consequently, whatever Being is the Fountain or Original
 of all that Power, Wisdom and Goodness which we admire in the World, it is a
 Being much more resembling the Soul or thinking Part, than the Body or passive
 Part of Man. All material Things manifestly disclaim any Intelligence or Thought
 of their own. They are acted indeed and moved in a wise and regular Manner,
 by Design and to some Purpose, but they do not act or move themselves. Man
 has a Power of acting or moving himself and other Things about him, to a cer-
 tain Degree, and he perceives or is conscious that he has it. But yet withal he is
 conscious that he himself did not exist from Eternity, and so could not always have this
 Power: And therefore he perceives that he depends upon some other Cause for his
 Being, which did exist before him. And thus whatever Perfections or Powers there
 are in the Mind of Man, they were made or caused by a Being, yet more perfect,
 because antecedent to Man, and capable of communicating such Powers and Per-

^f "Επειτ' οὐκ οἶσι (Θεὸς ἀνθρώπων) φρονίσιζεν, οἱ πρῶτον μὲν μόνον τῷ ζῶνι ἀνθρώπῳ ὀρθὸν ἀνίστησαν, ἢ δὲ ὀρθότης καὶ περὶ
 οὐρανὸν πλεῖστον ποιεῖ δυνάσασθαι, καὶ τὰ ὑπερθεῖν μάχων θεῶν, ἃ ἡττῶν κακοπαθεῖν. *Xenoph.* ἀπομνημ. lib. 1. cap. 4. § 11.

^g Καὶ μὲν γλῶττιν γε πάντων τῷ ζῶνι ἐχόντων, μόνῳ τῷ ἄνθρωπῳ ἐποίησαν (οἱ Θεοὶ) οἷαν ἄλλοτε ἀλλαχὲ ψαύε-
 σαι τῷ στόματι δρᾶσθαι τε τῷ φωνῇ καὶ σημαίνειν πάντα ἀλλήλοις αὐτοῖς ἐβλόμεθα. *Xenoph.* *ibid.* § 12.

fections as are in Man, which Man by Experience knows in himself he cannot communicate to any other Being. And from hence by necessary reasoning we may conclude, that the first Cause of all Perfection must necessarily be Eternal or Self-existent, that is, it neither had, nor possibly could have any superior or antecedent Cause of its Being. Leng. S E R M. VIII.

BUT since this Self-existent Being is (as I said before) much more resembled by the Soul or invisible Part of Man, than by any Thing outward or sensible, its Attributes or Perfections will be more fully represented, and better understood, by being compared with the correspondent Powers or Perfections in the Mind of Man. Let us therefore briefly consider the human Mind or Soul, with respect to those Attributes of Power, Wisdom and Goodness, the Perfection of which we attribute to the supreme Being. And we shall find in Man not merely the Effects of them, such as are discernible in all the Parts of Nature, as I have before shewn, but likewise some Image or Resemblance of the Attributes themselves, or a Capacity in the Mind of Man to exercise them in a limited Degree. Thus, for Instance, the Mind or Soul of Man has a Power of actuating the Body, though not seen or felt in it; of moving or not moving all or any Part of it at pleasure; of determining its Motion this Way or that Way, without being first moved or impelled by any outward Force, that is, a Power of beginning Motion of itself, which is indeed a true and real Power, and such as Matter is not capable of; a Power of willing, chusing or acting freely, or without being acted upon by any external Agent. I know, that those Men who are unwilling to allow the Being of any God, but the Universe, or any spiritual Substance, or any Thing distinct from Matter and Motion, do likewise of Consequence deny this Power of beginning Motion, or what in other Words is called *Freewill*, to be in Man; because they say there is always some Cause or other, which antecedently determines him to chuse and act this Way or that Way: And by this they think a Man is as necessarily moved to act, as a Clock to strike, though it may be a by longer Chain of Causes, one depending upon another, so that the impulsive Cause cannot be so immediately seen. But here in this way of Reasoning they always either beg the Question, that is, would first have us take it for granted, that there is no other Being in the World but Matter differently modified, which never acts but as it is acted upon, or else they confound a *moral* Motive, or rational Ground of a Man's acting, with a *physical* efficient Cause: So that an abstracted Reason inducing, and a bodily Impulse forcing us to to this or that, are with them taken for the same Thing, though they are Things as entirely distinct as Sound and Colour; and one would think that, as Dr. Barrow expresses it, *No Man is surely so dull that he cannot perceive a huge Difference between being dragged by a violent Hand, and drawn to Action by a strong Reason; although it may puzzle him to express that Difference.* I might add a great deal more concerning self-moving, or self-determining Power in the Mind of Man, which yet perhaps would be better understood by a Man's carefully consulting the Operations of his own Mind. But this Matter has of late been set in so clear a Light, by an excellent Person^h, that I think there is no Occasion at present for enlarging upon it.

2. As to Wisdom in the Mind of Man, we may observe several excellent Instances. I need not mention Sensation or Perception, which are but the first necessary Inlets to Knowledge, or Rudiments of it, caused by the Intervention of our outward Senses, and which perhaps are not peculiar to Man. But we may take Notice of such Abilities as these which follow; its Power of reflecting upon itself and its own Ideas, as well as upon Things without itself; its comparing, reasoning and judging of things past, present and future; its considering and suiting Ends to Means, and acting always with some Design or View of Good, real or apparent: The Power of inventing and contriving, improving and perfecting many noble Arts and Sciences, by considering the Nature of several Causes and their Effects, and the Dependencies of one Thing upon another; the Quickness of its Thought, and its Power of representing to itself, in an Instant, Things at the greatest Distance, as if

^h See Dr. Clarke's *Letters to Mr. Leibnitz*.

Leng. they were present, without the Trouble of local Motion; the Power of forming
 S E R M. to itself abstracted Notions of Things, and as it were created Subjects of Thought,
 VIII. which have no other actual Existence but in itself, and judging of their Agree-
 ment or Disagreement with one another, and thereby of producing many useful
 Truths. These and many others are the Properties of an Human Mind, which
 shew it to be an intelligent Being of a Nature quite different from that of Matter,
 however modified; which made some of the most sagacious Heathen Philosophers
 judge it to be *Divine*, or of the same Nature with God himself, and therefore
 Eternal also.

3. As to Goodness, though it must be confessed, that the Traces of it are not
 always so visible, as we could wish; the true Reason of which Failure is best
 learned from Divine Revelation, yet there are not wanting such Marks even of
 that, where ill Custom, and ill Example, and Want of due Culture hath not
 quite destroyed them, as shew, that it does originally belong to the Mind of
 Man; so that a Man must be monstrously depraved indeed, that has lost all Sense
 of doing Good. There are hardly any so bad as not inwardly to approve of the
 Exercise of Justice, Benignity, Gratitude, and Sincerity; and to abhor all Acts of
 Injustice, Cruelty, Ingratitude, and Baseness. We should not call the generous
 Propension of doing Kindness to others by the Name of *Humanity*, if such an
 Inclination did not originally belong to *Human Nature*; nor could all Men be so
 generally prone to distaste and think amiss of all Effects of pure Selfishness in
 others, if a friendly or *Social Principle* were not natural. And here I cannot but
 observe, that most of those Pretenders to Philosophy, whether ancient or modern,
 who have excluded a wise and good Providence out of their Scheme, have also
 given the worst Character that can be of Human Nature, making mere Self-
 Enjoyment and Fear the only Principles of Human Virtue. ^k That *Epicurus* and
 his Followers made the *chief Good* or ultimate End of human Happiness to con-
 sist in Pleasure, and that Pleasure to arise, either from mere bodily Sensations, or
 from Reflection upon such Sensations, is well known to all that are acquainted
 with the Writings of the Ancients. And that this Opinion reduces Man very
 near to the Level of a Brute, is evident at the first Sight to any one that considers
 it: and the Maintainers of it are not much concerned to deny this Consequence.
 [But they that would see this Opinion and its Consequences examined and con-
 futed at large, may find their Satisfaction in *Tully's* second Book *de Finibus*, where
 the Matter is set in a very clear Light.] And as for that other Principle of the
 same Sect, that ^l *All Kindness and Good-will arises from Weakness*, it has of later
 Days been copied by those who make the natural State of Man a State of War,
 (in which every Man is an Enemy to all others,) and all peaceable and kind Of-
 fices the Effect only of Fear, arising from a Sense of our own Weakness and In-
 ability to subdue all others. But though this may indeed be a Representation of
 these Men's own corrupted Temper; yet if it were not a very false Account of
 Human Nature in general, the World would be in a much worse Condition than
 it is. For, Thanks to the Author of our Nature, there are in these very Men
 some such natural Propensions to Society as overthrow their assumed Principle,
 and shew, that Man is naturally a *Social Animal*. Upon which account, besides
 the Consideration of the forementioned Excellencies in the Mind of Man, singly
 taken, by which in some sort he resembles the Supreme Being, we may also ob-
 serve, how the joint Exercise of them produces many noble and beneficial Effects
 in the World, in some Kind resembling those of Providence, though in Degree
 infinitely below them. From hence come all those Conveniencies of human Life,

ⁱ Itaque quicquid est illud, quod sentit, quod sapit, quod vult, quod viget, coeleste & divinum est, ob eamque rem æternum sit necesse est. Nec verò Deus ipse, qui intelligitur à nobis, alio modo intelligi potest, nisi mens so-
 luta quædam & libera, segregata ab omni concrezione mortali, omnia sentiens & movens, ipsaque prædita motu
 sempiterno. *Cic. Tusc. lib. 1. cap. 27.*

^k — Quippe qui (*Epicurus*) testificetur ne intelligere quidem se posse ubi sit, aut quid sit ullum bonum, præter
 illud, quod cibo aut potione & aurium delectatione, & obscena voluptate capiatur. *Cic. de Finib. lib. 2. cap. 3.*

— Est autem à te semper dictum, nec gaudere quemquam nisi propter corpus, nec dolere. *Ib. cap. 30.*
 Negas animi ullum esse gaudium, quod non referatur ad corpus. *Ib.*

^l — Omnis in imbecillitate est & gratia & caritas. *De Nat. Deor. lib. 1. cap. ult.*

the procuring and improving of which makes so great a Part of the Business of Men, both in their private and social State; such as building, planting, tilling, inventing new and useful Arts of all Kinds, exercising Trade and Commerce, forming Designs, and making Laws and Rules for their more happy living in Society, seeking out Means of making their Communication and Intercourse with others more extensive, and exercising a Sort of Care and Providence, not only over their own Species, but even over many of the Brute Creatures also. Now from whence is it, but from an original Sense of Goodness in the Mind of Man, that Men direct their natural Portion of Wisdom and Power to such beneficial Purposes; and that their own Consciences reproach them, for every wilful Deviation from what appears to be just and right, that is, for every deliberate Action which is greatly contrary to, or inconsistent with, the natural Good of Mankind, though it may for the present gratify their mere animal Passions or Sensations? Corporeal Impressions alone could never produce such Sentiments of Remorse for acting contrary to Reason, or of Satisfaction for acting according to it; but would very often produce the contrary, if not controlled by superior Thought and Consideration, which is able to correct the present Impulses of Matter upon us: So that Reason and Thought is of a Nature very distinct from that of Matter and Motion, and superior to it.

To this purpose I might farther observe divers other Properties in the Mind of Man; which, though they are not so much Images of the Divine Perfections of a Supreme Being, as Endeavours of attaining something like them; yet they do tacitly imply our natural Apprehensions of such a Supreme Being, to whom such Perfections do necessarily belong. Of this Kind, for instance, is, The perpetually growing Desire of Knowledge; and that of all Kinds, as far as possible. *The Eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the Ear with hearing*; nor does the Mind, which is exercised in the Search of Truth, ever think it has proceeded far enough, but is always striving to enlarge its Views, and make new Additions to its Stock of Knowledge. In like manner, its perpetual Enquiry after Happiness or Good, is without all Bounds, and cannot be satisfied with any Thing less than infinite. It is always aspiring after something higher and nobler, than what at present it enjoys. Whatever Methods it takes to procure them, yet it is always, in its Nature, tending towards some farther real or imaginary Degrees of Happiness. Thus also it is constantly aiming at, and, as it were, reaching forward towards Immortality; and therefore naturally endeavouring some way or other to attain it. It finds in its Nature an utter Abhorrence of not being at all, so that it chuses an imaginary Existence rather than none, endeavouring always, by some means or other, to survive this Life, if it be but in Fame, and the Memory of others. This natural Desire or Instinct, even *Epicurus* himself could not but follow, though it were a Contradiction to his own Principles^m, when by his Will, he appointed a Day to be annually kept by his Followers, in commemoration of himself and *Metrodorus*. This Instinct is by *Tully*ⁿ more justly called, a *natural Presage of a Future State*, with which he observes, all the greatest and best Minds are most firmly possessed. Now the fore-mentioned Powers or Perfections, Abilities or Instincts, naturally in the Mind of Man, do indeed, to a considerate Man, argue a close Dependance upon a superior Being, in Nature, infinitely above any sensible Object, from whom these Perfections are derived, and whose Nature they do resemble. For seeing the same Perfections exercised in the World in an infinite Degree, which itself exercises in a smaller Compass and a lower Degree; How can it do otherwise than conclude, that there is an Infinite Mind, to whom all these Perfections originally belong? And thus is the Mind of Man naturally led to the Acknowledgment of a God, from reflecting upon itself.

I KNOW not how far such Considerations as these may move those Men who think of nothing but Matter and Motion, and are resolved to fetch the Principles

^m Of this see *Tully de Finibus*, lib. 2. cap. 31. and *Diogenes Laertius*, in the *Life of Epicurus*.

ⁿ — Inhæret in mentibus quasi seculorum quoddam augurium futurorum: idque in maximis ingeniis altissimisque animis & existit maximè & apparet facillimè. *Tusc. Disp.* lib. 1. cap. 15.

Leng. of all Things from thence. But I am persuaded, that if Men would seriously
 S E R M. consider Things as they are, without resolving first from whence they will have
 VIII. them come, they would more easily see from what Cause or Principle they do really
 ~~~~~ come; and would not ascribe Effects, in which such wonderful Wisdom, Power,  
 and Goodness, do manifestly appear, to Causes so infinitely below the Effects them-  
 selves.

Now the Result of what I have said, both in this and my former Discourse, upon this Third Ground of universal Persuasion of the Being of God, is this: The manifest Instances of inconceivable Wisdom, Power, and Goodness, constantly displayed in the Frame and Preservation of the World; and, in some measure, as it were, exemplified in the Mind of Man, could not proceed, either from Chance or Necessity; that is, from any casual Concourse of the minute Parts of Matter impelling one another, without any directing Cause; and therefore must argue an Intelligent Being, superior to all these Effects, to whom all these Perfections do originally belong.

THAT considerate and thinking Men did thus, by Reason and arguing from Effects to a first Cause, establish their Belief of the Being of a God and a Providence, (the Existence whereof they had perhaps generally been something acquainted withal, by Tradition, before they begun to reason about it) is a Matter of Fact, to which the Writings of all Ages give Testimony. And that their Argument was true and concluding, cannot be denied, but by supposing something, that implies some manifest Absurdity or Contradiction; such as, that Things may be without any sufficient Causes of their Being. Indeed to keep this Absurdity from appearing, Men who deny Providence would fain make use of the Word *Nature*, as a sufficient Solution for every Thing. But this is a Word of a very ambiguous and indeterminate Signification, 'till we first know what Principle he goes upon that uses it: For it has one Meaning with an *Epicurean*, and another with a *Stoic*, and another in another Sect of Philosophy. *Plato* observes, that some Pretenders to Philosophy in his Time, introduced Atheistical Opinions, by making *Nature* and Chance antecedent and superior to Art and Design, supposing that both the *four Elements* or Matter, and the Form of the Universe, the Heavenly Bodies, Plants and Animals, and all other Things, were made only by a fortuitous Mixture of contrary Qualities; *That they were not the Effect of any INTELLIGENT MIND or GOD, or of ART and DESIGN, but of NATURE and CHANCE; but that ART and DESIGN arose out of them afterwards.* And where he proceeds to discourse farther of this Opinion, he says, that *whosoever affirms this, must suppose, that Fire, and Water, and Earth, and Air, were the first of all Beings, and must call these by the Name of NATURE, and say that SOUL (or the Principle of Life and Thought) arose from them, and was subsequent to them.* And then going on to confute this Opinion, by shewing, that the Operations of *Mind*, Thinking, Understanding, Willing, &c. are antecedent to being *Hard* or *Soft*, *Light* or *Heavy*, and the like Properties of Matter; he observes, that *they make a wrong use of the Word NATURE, who apply it to the first original Production of Things, when they put MATTER or BODY in the first place. But that if they would allow SOUL or MIND to be older than MATTER or BODY, they might then be allowed to say, that such Things are so or so by Nature, but otherwise it is wrong to say so.*

° See Velleius in Tully de Nat. Deor. lib. 1. cap. 20.

P See Tully de Nat. Deor. lib. 2. cap. 32.

q Vide Platonem de Repub. lib. 10. pag. 889.

Ἔοικε (Φασί) τὰ μὲν μέγιστα αὐτῶν καὶ κάλλιστα ἀπεργάζεσθαι φύσιν ἢ τύχην, τὰ δὲ μικρότερα τέχνην, &c.

Ἔ καὶ πάντα ὅποσα τῇ ἑὐαντίων κρείσσει καὶ τύχῃ ἐξ ἀνάγκης συνεκέρχονται, ταῦτα καὶ κατὰ ταῦτα ἔγωγε γεννημένα τέτυκται ἔργον ὅλον καὶ πάντα ὅποσα κατ' ἔργον καὶ ζῶα αὐτὰ ἐφύτα ξύμπαντα, ὥρων πασῶν ἐν τέττονι γένει καὶ ἀφ' ὧν (φασίν) εἰδὲ ἀφ' οὗτος Θεὸν, εἰδὲ ἀφ' οὗτος τέχνην. ἀλλὰ, ὃ λέγομεν, φύσει καὶ τύχῃ τέχνην δὲ ὑστερον ἐν τέττονι ὑστερον γένει καὶ ἀφ' οὗτος, αὐτὴν, διηγεῖται ἐν διηγήσει, &c. Ib.

Ἔ Κινδυνεύει γὰρ ὃ λέγων ταῦτα, πῶς καὶ ὑδὼρ ἢ γῆ καὶ αἶρ, πρῶτα ἡγήσεται τῶν πάντων ἢ, καὶ τὴν φύσιν ὀνομάζειν ταῦτα αὐτὰ, ψυχῇ δὲ ἐν τέττονι ὑστερον. pag. 891.

Ἔ Οὐκ ὀρθῶς φύσιν βέλοντι λέγειν ἡμεῖς, ἀλλὰ τὰ πρῶτα (τὰ δὲ σώματα τιθέμεν τὰ πρῶτα) εἰ δὲ φανήσεται ψυχὴ πρῶτον, καὶ πῶς εἰδὲ αἶρ, ψυχὴ δὲ ἐν πρῶτοις γεννημένη, καὶ οὐκ ὀρθῶς λέγουσι ἀντὶ τῆς ἀφ' οὗτος, ὅτι φύσει ταῦτα ἔσονται ἔχοντα, ἀντὶ ψυχῇ τις ἐπιθείη πρῶτον ἔσονται σώματα, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὁ δαίμων. Ib. pag. 892.

THUS



THUS, when an intelligent and active Providence, antecedent and superior to Matter and Motion, is excluded, *Nature* can signify nothing but the State in which Things are, without any Consideration of what causes them to be; so that it is only the Name of a Train of Effects following one another, and not of any real Agent: And to this Sense all the Atheistical Hypotheses of *Nature* will at last be reduced. Sometimes by *Nature* is meant an active Principle, and then it either signifies the Supreme Being, and first Cause of all Things, described by another Name, intimating, not only his Power, but his Method of acting; or else it signifies an inferior Agent, made by the Supreme, to actuate the World under him in a stated Method; which is what some understand by the *Anima Mundi*. And in either of these Senses, it implies, either immediately or ultimately, a wise and intelligent Providence ordering all Things. But when any thing else is meant by it, 'tis only puzzling the Cause to ascribe any real Power to it.

Now setting aside the Use of this ambiguous Word, from which Men are apt to confound Causes and Effects without Distinction; they who deny a free, active, wise and good Providence governing the World, as the first Cause of all these Effects of which we have been speaking, must, in the Conclusion, be reduced to assert, either, that there is really no such Thing as Wisdom, Power, or Goodness in the World; or, that what we esteem such, is the mere, casual, or necessary Result of Matter and Motion; or else, that all Things were from Eternity in the very Way they now are: The Absurdity of all which will be very briefly shewn, in my next Discourse; when I shall likewise consider the Inference, which the Apostle here makes, from Mens having such natural Means of knowing God, which is, That *they are without Excuse, because that when they knew God, or had sufficient Means of knowing him, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful.*

*Now to the King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible, the only Wise God, be ascribed all Power, and Glory, and Honour, for evermore. Amen.*



## S E R M O N IX.

Preached *January* the 6th, 1717-18.

ROM. i. 20, 21.

*So that they are without Excuse :**Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, &c.*Leng.  
S E R M.  
IX.

**I**N these Words, and in the two Verses going before, which have been the Subject of some of my former Discourses, the Apostle asserts two Things:

*I. That God has, from the Beginning of the World, given sufficient Manifestations of his own eternal Power and Godhead to Mankind by his Works, or by what he has plainly done, and still continues to do in the World.*

*II. That Men having sufficient Means of knowing God, if they still either disown, or take no notice of his Being; if they neither glorify him as God, nor shew any Gratitude towards him; they become thereby utterly inexcusable, and may justly expect to fall under his Indignation, for their Neglect of him.*

THE former of these I have already considered: In doing of which, I hope, I have given a reasonable Account of the Ground or Foundation of that universal Persuasion of the Being of a God, which has possessed Mankind in all Ages and Nations: By which it appears, that the Motives to believe it are such, as not only the unthinking Vulgar, but Men of the best Understanding and Capacity, have, upon diligent Examination, owned to be sufficiently convincing; as they have from Time to Time testified in their Writings. And to such as do acknowledge their Conviction of the Being of God, upon the foregoing Evidence, I might, without any farther Trouble, apply myself, and desire them to consider the second Assertion of the Apostle, in the Words now before us, which are an Inference from the former.

BUT because there are some Men so perverse, as not to own themselves satisfied of the Sufficiency of any Arguments drawn from visible Effects, to prove a God or a Providence, 'till they see the utter Impossibility that Things should be, as they appear to be, any other Way than by such Providence; therefore to prevent all Cavilling at the Conclusions to be drawn from the foregoing Premises, before I proceed to consider the Consequence here intended to be spoke to, I shall, as I promised in the close of my last Discourse, very briefly shew, That whoever considers the Frame of the World, and of Human Nature in particular, and observes the Effects of Wisdom, Power, and Goodness, of which we have been speaking in the foregoing Discourses, and yet denies a Free, Active, Wise, and Good Providence, making and governing the World, to be the first Cause of all these Effects, must in the Conclusion be reduced to assert something which implies a plain and manifest Absurdity. For the Result of all the Reasonings of such Men,



Men, upon this Subject, must, in the End, amount to one of these Assertions: *Leng.*  
Either, SERM.  
IX.

1. THAT there is really no such Thing as Wisdom, Power or Goodness in the World. Or,

2. THAT what we esteem the Effect of such, is only the mere casual or necessary Result of Matter and Motion: Or,

3. THAT all Things were from Eternity, succeeding one another necessarily in the Way they now are.

'Tis true, that no atheistical Persons of common Sense will directly go about to maintain all these Assertions; nor will they stick to any one of them, when they are hard pressed with the Absurdity of it, but will presently retreat to another; as if their Design were, by frequent Changes of their Ground, rather to offend Religion than to defend themselves: Whereas, to make their own Principle secure, it ought on some Side or other to be defensible, which none of the foregoing Assertions can be: For,

1. THAT there is really no such Thing as Wisdom, Power or Goodness in the World; and that therefore there can be no arguing at all from thence to prove a God or a Providence, seems at the first Proposal a very absurd Assertion; and perhaps few of them will now directly say it, in so many Words: But by their Earnestness to set aside all final Causes, as having nothing to do in the making of the World, or any Part of it, they shew a great Inclination to close with it. For where there is no final Cause, there is no antecedent Intention, and where all Intention is excluded, there is no intelligent acting, and consequently no Exercise of Wisdom or Goodness, nor indeed of Power, properly so called. And they are wont to admire the Infidels of former Days, who have certainly said as much as this Assertion comes to. *Lucretius*, for Instance, asserts, <sup>a</sup> that the Eye was not made to see withal, nor the Ear to hear withal, nor was any other Part of the Body designed originally for any of the Uses to which we find it so very naturally, as we think, and constantly applied; but that the Use of these Things was found out long after: And all this is built upon this notable Reason, *because Things must be before their Uses*. Now if this Reason have any Weight in it, we may as well say, that no Man could ever designedly contrive Clocks or Watches, to shew the Hour of the Day, because they could not shew it 'till they were made. I hope such Men, who argue at this rate, will give us Leave to say, that they cannot design any of their Arguments to prove any Thing against the Being of Providence, or, indeed, that they have any Design at all in reasoning after this Manner. For if there be any such Thing as antecedent Design or Intention to be proved from Men's arguing or their acting, then there is in this World some Being which has Intelligence, and acts with Design, adapting Means to Ends foreseen, and laying Premises together, in order to infer a Conclusion; that is, there is really Wisdom, Power and Goodness in the World: And if the Effects of these appear in a much higher and more evident Degree, in the Formation and Use of Things which we call natural, than in any of those Contrivances which are the Effects of human Art, then it is an Absurdity not to think the efficient Cause of them, in a much higher Degree, intelligent than Man is. And since Man himself, with all his Powers and Perfections, could not make himself, but must proceed from a superior Cause, that Cause must have all the real Perfections which Man has in an eminent Degree, or else those Perfections in Man would be caused purely by nothing, which is a manifest Contradiction. But

<sup>a</sup> Effugere illorumque errorem præmeditemur,  
Lumina qui faciunt oculorum clara creata  
Prospicere ut possimus, &c. *lib. iv. 821.*  
Nil ideo quoniam natum est in corpore ut uti  
Possemus, sed, quod natum est, id procreat usum.  
Nec fuit ante videre oculorum lumina nata.  
— Multoque creatæ sunt prius aures  
Quam sonus est auditus: & omnia denique membra  
Ante fuere, ut opinor, eorum quam foret usus.  
Haud igitur potuere utendi crescere causa. *Ib.*



*Leng.* 2. WHEN they say, that what we account the Effects of Wisdom, Power and  
 S E R M. Goodness, or of an intelligent Being, is only the mere casual or necessary Result of  
 IX. Matter and Motion, this will still be liable to the same Absurdity in the End, that  
 ~~~~~ *something is caused by nothing.* For if there be any intelligent or understanding  
 Being in the World, any Being endued with Consciousness and Perception, as Man
 is allowed to be, such Intelligence, Perception and Consciousness, must either be
 a Perfection distinct from that of Matter and Motion, produced by a superior, active,
 intelligent Being, which is itself neither Matter nor Motion (and to allow this, is
 to own a God and a spiritual Substance, which is all that we can contend for in
 this Argument;) or it must be a Composition of unintelligent Figure and Motion;
 or else it must be something caused by nothing. Now that any Composition of un-
 intelligent Figure and Motion, should be Intelligence, Thought, Perception or
 Consciousness, is altogether absurd: Because, whatever the Composition of any
 material Thing is, it is still in Reality only that Thing (or Things) of which it is com-
 pounded. It is not altered in Nature, but only in Situation of Parts: It may ap-
 pear differently to our Senses, but to our Reason it is still the same, let the Parts
 be never so mixed or divided. A Globe cut into two Hemispheres, is not a Jot
 nearer to Thought than it was before, because it is only the two Parts of the same
 Whole: Nor can two equal Hemispheres put together have any other Nature than
 what a Globe has: And the like may be said of all Divisions or Compositions of
 Figure, or of Matter and Motion, how various soever. Therefore unless Figure be
 Thought, and all Matter have Sense, Perception and Consciousness (which is so
 absurd a Supposition, that though some have advanced it, yet, I believe, few will
 maintain it) then no Matter, as such, can have it or cause it. And then what-
 ever has Sense, Perception and Understanding, if it be not caused by a superior, in-
 telligent, immaterial Being, must be caused by nothing; that is, there must be an
 Effect without any Cause at all, which is absurd.

^b *Tully* very often in his Writings charges the *Hypothesis* of *Epicurus* with this
 Absurdity of assigning a particular Motion of *Declination* to Atoms, (which *Lu-
 cretius* calls *Clinamen Principiorum*) in order to produce Freewill, or a Power of
 acting voluntarily, and yet not pretending to assign any Cause of such Declination,
 which, he says, is *c the most absurd Blunder that any Philosopher can fall into.*
 And he makes this a fundamental Fault in the Philosophy ^a both of *Epicurus* and
Democritus, that they considered only Matter, and not the efficient Cause or
 Power by which Things are produced. And indeed whoever does this, will, in the End,
 be forced upon the same absurdity that *Epicurus* was, or something very like
 it. And the removing it a Degree further off, will not alter the Case, unless it be
 to make the thing more absurd when we come at it. Just as *Epicurus* to avoid
 one Difficulty, which *Democritus*, it seems, did not take Care to fence against, run
 upon this Solution, which, as ^c *Tully* says, was much worse than owning the Thing
 to be indefensible. And this has, in the Event, been the Case of all those Schemes
 of Philosophy, which have pretended to make the World without an infinite in-
 telligent Mind being concerned in it.

3. To suppose that all Things were from Eternity, succeeding one another ne-
 cessarily, in the Way they now are, without any supreme intelligent Power to dis-
 pose them, or give them Motion, will also be equally absurd. That something must
 have existed from all Eternity, cannot be denied by any one; for else nothing
 could ever have existed. This must therefore either be some one self-existent, un-
 changeable independent Being, from whom all other Things originally receive their
 Being; or else there must be an eternal Succession of dependent changeable Beings,

^b *De Finibus Bon. & Mal.* lib. 1. cap. 6. And in his Book I. *de Nat. Deor.* cap. 25. And in several Places of his
 Book *de Fato.*

^c Ait enim declinare atomum sine causâ, quo nihil turpius physico. *De Finib.* lib. 1. cap. 6.

^d Utriusque (*Democriti* sc. & *Epicuri*) cum multa non probo, tum illud in primis, quod cum in rerum naturâ duo
 quærenda sint, unum, quæ materia sit, ex qua quæque res efficiatur; alterum, quæ vis sit, quæ quidque efficiat; de
 materiâ differuerunt, vim & causam efficiendi reliquerunt. *Ib.*

^e *Epicurus* cum videret si atomi ferrentur in locum inferiorem suoque pondere nihil fore in nostrâ potestate, quod esset
 earum motus certus & necessarius; invenit quomodo necessitatem effugeret, quod videlicet *Democritum* fugerat. Ait
 atomum, cum pondere & gravitate directâ deorsum feratur, declinare paululum. Hoc dicere turpius est quàm illud quod
 vult, non posse defendere. *De Nat. Deor.* I. 25.

as this visible World comprehends, one producing another, without any original Cause at all; that is, there must be an infinite Series of Effects following one another, without any efficient Cause, which is absurd. Leng. SER M. IX.

Aristotle indeed is alledged as an Affirmer of the Eternity of the World; and being a Man of a very piercing Judgment, Atheists sometimes think themselves sufficiently defended under the Patronage of his Name. But if they would really consult his Writings, they would find that his Arguments afford their Cause but very little Defence. For whatever Eternity he may ascribe to the material World, he is very far from doing it in their Sense: He never thought, that Matter could move itself, or could be the original Cause of all Things; but he makes ^f an *Eternal, Intelligent, Independent Mind*, to be the first Cause or Principle of all Things, and that which gives Motion to all Things, being itself unmoveable and unchangeable: As may be seen at large both in his *Physicks* and *Metaphysicks*. And he every where makes *Beauty* and *Order* to be the Effects of *Mind* and *Understanding*: And he commends *Anaxagoras* in many Places, ^g for this Principle, that an *intending Mind* was the Cause of what is good and right, and the Mover of Matter, for some End and Design. And he is so far from thinking *final* or *intending* Causes unphilosophical, that he exposes that Philosophy, as very ridiculous, which pretends to give an Account of the Formation of Animals without them, and he says, that ^h an ordinary Carpenter would give a much better Account of a Piece of Work, of which he was the Maker, than such kind of Philosophers did, who went no farther than the mere mechanical Motion of one Part of Matter upon another. And he elsewhere ⁱ justly blames those Philosophers, who allowed nothing but Matter, in the Universe, for introducing Motion without any active Cause or Principle to produce it; and likewise, because ^k they were not able to give any Account of what was good and fit (τὸ εὖ καὶ καλῶς) in the Being or Formation of Things, from Matter alone, or from Chance and Fortune. And ^l those who make Body or Matter the only Substance, or universal Nature, he condemns of great Mistake, inasmuch as they consider only the first Principles of Body, but not of Things incorporeal, though there be Things incorporeal; and likewise, because, pretending to philosophize about the Nature of all Things, they take away (or leave out) the Cause of Motion. So that *Aristotle* was far from thinking an immaterial Substance and Contradiction, or that Matter could move itself, or think and act.

THUS I have endeavoured briefly to represent the Absurdities which they must of necessity be driven to, who deny a Supreme, Intelligent, Eternal, and Self-existent Being to be the original Cause of all Things, and the Author of all the *Beauty*, *Order*, and *Harmony* of the World; and the Fountain of all the Power, Wisdom, and Goodness, which is manifest in the Frame and Preservation of it.

^f Ὅτι μὴ ἔν ἐστιν ἑστία τις αἰδίου καὶ ἀκίνητου, ὅ καὶ κεχωρισμένη τῇ αἰδιότητι φανερὸν ἐστὶ ἐξηγημένων. *Metaphys.* lib. 12. cap. 7.

Ἡ μὲν γὰρ ἀρχὴ καὶ τὸ πρῶτον τῶν ὄντων ἀκίνητον ὅ καὶ αὐτὸ καὶ τῆς συνμεικτικῆς — καὶ τὸ κινεῖν αἰδίου ὅ πρῶτον τῶν κινημένων, and much more to the same purpose, lib. 12. cap. 8, 9, 10. where, after shewing that there cannot be a progression of Causes in infinitum, without one original independent cause, he concludes with these words, τὰ δὲ ὅντα ἢ βύλεται πολιτεύεσθαι κακῶς, ἢ ἀγαθὸν πολυκοινοῦν, εἰς κοίτην. And in his *Physicks*, lib. 8. cap. 6. he has these words: Ἐν γὰρ τοῖς φύσει, δεῖ τὸ περιεχόμενον καὶ τὸ βέλτιον, εἰς ὃν δέχεται ὑπάρχειν, ἰκανὸν εἶναι ἐν, ὃ πρῶτον τῶν ἀκίνητων αἰδίου ὃν ἔστι τοῖς ἄλλοις ἀρχὴ κινήσεως. φανερὸν δὲ καὶ ἐκ τούτου ὅτι ἀνάγκη εἶναι τι ἐν αἰδίῳ τὸ πρῶτον κινεῖν, &c.

^g *Metaph.* lib. 1. cap. 3. ὅ lib. 12. cap. 10. Ἀναξαγόρας δὲ ὡς κινεῖ τὸ ἀγαθὸν ἀρχὴν, ὃ γὰρ νῦν κινεῖ, ἀλλὰ κινεῖ ἵνα καὶ τινος.

Πολλὰ γὰρ μὴ γὰρ τὸ αἶτιον τῆς καλῆς καὶ ὀρθῆς τῆς νῦν λέγει. *De Anima*, lib. 1. cap. 2.

^h Πλὴν βέλτιον ὁ τέλειον. ὃ γὰρ ἰκανὸν ἔστι αὐτῶν, τὸ τοσούτον εἶπεν ὅτι ἐμπειρόντι τῶν ὀργάνων τὸ μὴ κοινὸν ἐκλύετο, τὸ δὲ ἐπίπεδον, ἀλλὰ διότι τῶν πληγῶν ἐποικισαῖς τοιαύτῃ καὶ τίνῃ ἐνεκα, ἐρεῖ τῇ αἰτίᾳ, &c. *De Partib. Animalium*, lib. 1. cap. 1.

ⁱ Εἰ γὰρ ὅτι μάλιστα πᾶσα φύσις καὶ γένεσις ἐκ τινος ὡς ἐνὸς ἢ πλειόνων ἐστὶ, ἀλλὰ τί τούτο συμβαίνει καὶ τί τὸ αἶτιον, ὃ γὰρ δὴ τὸ γε ὑποκειμένον αὐτὸ ποιεῖ μεταβάλλειν ἑαυτὸ. λέγω δ' οἶον, ὅτε τὸ ξύλον ὅτε ὁ χαλκὸς αἶτιον τῆς μεταβάλλειν ἑαυτὸν αὐτῶν. ὃ δὲ ποιεῖ τὸ μὴ ξύλον κλίην, ὃ δὲ χαλκὸς ἀνδραίνει, ἀλλ' ἑτέρον τι τῆς μεταβολῆς ἴδιον. τὸ δὲ τούτο ζητεῖν ἐστὶ τὸ εἶρεσθαι ἀρχὴν ζητεῖν, ὡς ἂν ἡμεῖς φαίμεθα, ὅθεν ἡ ἀρχὴ τῆς κινήσεως. *Metaph.* lib. 1. cap. 3.

^k Τὸ γὰρ εὖ καὶ καλῶς τὰ μὴ ἔχον τὰ δὲ γίνεσθαι τῶν ὄντων ἴσως ὅτε γῆν ἢ τ' ἄλλο τῶν τοιούτων ὅθεν ἢ τ' εἰκὸς αἶτιον εἶναι — ὃ δ' αὐτὰ αὐτομάτως καὶ τύχῃ τοσούτον ἐπιτρέψαι πρῶτον καλῶς ἔχει. *Ibid.*

^l Ὅσοι μὲν ἐν ἐν τῇ τῶν καὶ μίαν τῇ φύσει ὡς ὕλην τιθέασιν, καὶ ταύτῃ σωματικῇ ἐμεινῶν ἔχουσιν, δὴλον ὅτι πολλὰ ὡς ἀμαρτάνουσιν. τῶν γὰρ σωμάτων τὰ φοιτῶντα τεθέασιν μόνον, τῶν δὲ ἀσωμάτων ὅ, ὄντων καὶ ἀσωμάτων. — καὶ περὶ πάντων φυσιολογῶν τὸ τῆς κινήσεως αἶτιον ἀναιρεῖται. *Metaph.* lib. 1. cap. 7.

Leng. And I might have drawn this Matter out to a much greater Length in the abstracted or metaphysical Way of Reasoning, if my intended Method would have

SERM. IX. allowed me to pursue that Course. But because this has been fully done in that *Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God*, which was some Years ago published by an excellent Author, as the Substance of his Discourses upon this Subject, I shall rather refer those that desire farther Satisfaction in this Way to that Treatise itself, where the Arguments of Mr. *Hobbes* and *Spinoza*, and other Materialists, are fully answered; and the Self-existence of one Independent Infinite Being, of all possible Perfection, demonstratively proved.

I PROCEED therefore now to what is asserted in the Words of the Text, as an Inference from the foregoing Doctrine, viz.

II. *That Men having sufficient Means of knowing God, (i. e. plain and evident Reason to convince them, that there is such a Being,) if notwithstanding this, they either disown, or take no notice of his Being; if they neither glorify him as God, nor shew any Gratitude towards him; they become thereby utterly inexcusable, and will therefore certainly fall under his just Indignation for their Neglect of him.*

THIS is what the Apostle affirms even of the Heathen World, *That they are without Excuse, because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful.*

THIS Consequence is what those Men would fain avoid, who are inclined to Atheism, but yet are not hardy enough absolutely to deny those Demonstrations which are brought for the Being of a God, when they are pressed with them. They have Understanding enough to see the Absurdity of attempting to prove it impossible, that there should be such a Being, as we call God: And therefore they are willing to wave that Point, and, to compromise the Matter, would content themselves to let it rest as a speculative Point, of which much may be said on both sides; though they are pleased when they can find out Objections against any particular Method of proving it. But then they take it ill that we should offer to persuade them, that they are under any Obligation themselves actually to own the Belief of such a Being, or to tell them that they can be under any Penalty from him for not believing, or not attending to the Consequences of such Belief. Why should we not be contented to let them alone to their own Uncertainty; and, with *Protagoras*, to declare freely, that they have nothing to say, whether there be any God or no? Nay farther, they would persuade us, that it is inconsistent with that original Notion or Idea of Goodness which we must presuppose in God, if there is any such Being, to make any Man suffer for denying, or not believing his Being. A certain Author, who in his Writings seems much more concerned for an elegant Turn, and, as he fancies, a polite Manner of Writing, than for any real Consistency of Thought, Justness of Sentiment, or strict Consequence of Reason expressed in it, has in a very artificial manner dressed up a Plea, in behalf of those who call themselves *Free-thinkers*; which he proposes as a Security against all Superstition, "To remember that there is nothing in God, but what is God-like; that He is either not at all, or truly and perfectly good. But that when we are afraid to use our Reason freely, even on that very Question, Whether he really be or not; we then actually presume him bad, and flatly contradict that pretended Character of Goodness and Greatness, whilst we discover this Mistrust of his Temper, and Fear of his Anger and Resentment, in the Case of this Freedom of Enquiry. —" And again, "What Merit can there be in believing God or his Providence, upon frivolous and weak Grounds? What Virtue in assuming an Opinion contrary to the Appearance of Things, and resolving to hear nothing that may be said against it? Excellent Character of the God of Truth! that he should be offended at us, for having refused to put the Lie upon our Understandings, as much as in us lay, and be satisfied with us,

^m *Characteristicks*, Vol. I. pag. 33, 34, 35.

“ for having believed at a venture, and against our Reason, what might have been *Leng.*
 “ the greatest Falshood in the World, for any Thing we could bring as a Proof or *SERM.*
 “ Evidence to the contrary.” And again he tells us, “ A Man must have surely *IX.*
 “ an unhappy Opinion of God, and believe him not so good by far as he knows
 “ himself to be, if he imagines, that an impartial Use of his Reason, in any
 “ Matter of Speculation whatsoever, can make him run any risque hereafter:
 “ And that a mean Denial of his Reason, and an Affectation of Belief, in any
 “ Point too hard for his Understanding, can entitle him to any Favour in
 “ another World. This is being Sycophants in Religion, mere Parasites of De-
 “ votion.

Now though this Author has in some Passages of his Writings very fine Strokes in Defence of a Supreme Governing Mind, which, if pursued, do not seem very consistent with what he here insinuates; and has indeed in this Place been so cautious, as not directly to assert, that the downright open Profession of Atheism cannot be any Way displeasing to God Almighty, or incur any just Resentment from him; yet if we consider the Drift of this ^a whole Treatise, and how kindly in other Places he takes all those Men into his Protection, the Falseness of whose Philosophy he could not but discern, who have no other Title to that of *Free-thinking*, which he would encourage, but their liberal charging all Religion with Imposture or Credulity; and how much he puts all Kind of Revelation, real and pretended, upon the same Bottom: And if we consider farther, how those Men, who have treated all Religion in grosser Language, have cited this Author with great Approbation, as a Patron of their Opinions; we may, I think, without any Injustice, say, That this Way of Reasoning does really, in their Judgment, imply so much: And especially when the supposed Character of the *Divine Being* is, in the Conclusion, intended to be drawn under the following Resemblance of a Prince or Minister of State, in these Words: “ ’Tis natural (says he^o) for us to
 “ wish our Merit should be known; particularly if it be our Fortune to have
 “ served a Nation as a good Minister; or as some Prince or Father of a Country,
 “ to have rendered happy a considerable Part of Mankind under our Care. But
 “ if it happened, that of this Number there should be some so ignorantly bred,
 “ and of so remote a Province, as to have lain out of the Hearing of our Name
 “ and Actions; or hearing of them, should be so puzzled with odd and contrary
 “ Stories told up and down concerning us, that they know not what to think,
 “ whether there were really in the World any such Person as our self: Should
 “ we not in good Truth be ridiculous to take Offence at this? And should we
 “ not pass for extravagantly morose and ill-humoured, if instead of treating the
 “ Matter in Raillery, we should think in earnest of *revenging our selves* on the
 “ offending Parties, who, out of their rustick Ignorance, ’till Judgment or In-
 “ credulity, had detracted from our Renown?” These Words, one would think, do not want a Comment to let us into their Meaning, or designed Application; or if they did, those which follow will sufficiently clear it. For thus he goes on:
 “ ^p How shall we say then? Does it really deserve Praise to be thus concerned
 “ about it? Is the doing Good for Glory’s sake so divine a Thing? Or is it
 “ not diviner to do good, even where it may be thought inglorious, even to the
 “ ungrateful, and to those who are wholly insensible of the Good they receive?
 “ How comes it then, that what is *divine* in us should lose its Character in the
 “ *divine Being*, and that, according as the *Deity* is represented to us, he should
 “ more resemble the weak, womanish, and impotent Part of our Nature, than
 “ the generous, manly, and divine?”

Now the Sum of all this Kind of Reasoning can amount only to this, that it is inconsistent with Divine Goodness, to make any Man suffer for the denying of the Divine Being. I desire that I may always have the highest Veneration possible for the Divine Goodness, and am very ready to grant, with this Author,
 “ ^a That nothing but what is morally excellent can have place in the Deity;”

^a *Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour*, pag. 95.

^o Pag. 37.

^p Pag. 38.

^q Pag. 39.

Leng. and that "unless we be satisfied that he is good, and cannot deceive us, there can
 SERM. "be no real religious Faith or Confidence;" and moreover, that, "if there be
 IX. "really something previous to Revelation, some antecedent Demonstration of Reason to assure us, that God is, and, withal, that he is so good, as not to deceive
 "us; the same Reason, if we will trust to it, will demonstrate to us, that God
 "is so good, as to exceed the very best of us in Goodness?" Yet, notwithstanding, I can by no means deduce the same general Conclusion which this Author does in these Words: *After this manner, we can have no Dread or Suspicion to render us uneasy: For it is MALICE only, and not GOODNESS, that can make us afraid.* Indeed a good Man, who always acts sincerely, according to his best Understanding, and is ever ready to be governed by those Principles of Religion, which the highest and most unprejudiced Reason will assure him are worthy of God, has no Reason to be afraid of any Deficiency in the Divine Goodness towards him, which is ever ready to compassionate even all such Mistakes as are purely involuntary. But what is this to a Man, that having Means of knowing God, yet either utterly denies, or takes no notice of his Being? All Men indeed, by reason of their different Degrees of Understanding, cannot have equally perfect Notions of the Nature of God and his Attributes: But there is no Man who has attained to the Use of his Reason, but he can evidently discover that he did not make himself: And I hope I have formerly shewn, that there is no Man of so remote a Province, as to be out of the Hearing of the Name and Actions of the great Governour of the World. The visible Creation is a Book open to all Men, and every Man carries his own Mind about him; and these Grounds for the Belief of a God and his Providence, are neither weak nor frivolous. Such a Belief, is so far from assuming an Opinion contrary to the Appearance of Things, or putting a Lye upon the Understanding, or believing at a venture, and against our Reason, that if I should say with the Psalmist, that the Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament sheweth his Handy-work; and that there is neither Speech or Language, where their Voice is not heard; the Reasoning of an Heathen Author would bear Testimony to it, who tells us, 'that That Man must be void of all Mind or Understanding himself, who thinks that there is no superior Mind directing the wonderful Order of the Heavenly Bodies, and preserving the incredible Constancy of their Motions, upon which the Preservation and Well-being of all Things has so great a Dependance. And what the natural Consequence arising from hence is, we are told in another Place by the same Author, even where he is as much as may be discouraging all Superstition: That there is some supreme, excellent and eternal Being; and that the same Being is to be had in the greatest Reverence and Admiration by all Mankind, the beautiful Frame of the World, and the Order of the Heavenly Bodies forces us to confess. Now it is certain, that no Man, who disputes against the Being of a God, can justly pretend Ignorance of his Being. Nor can the Denial of his Being consist with any Kind of Reverence or Admiration of him; 'for the very first Instance and Foundation of all Respect which we can pay him, must be an Acknowledgment of his Being. Let it then but be granted, that there are eternal and necessary Differences of Things, and that the Will of God determines itself always to act, according to the eternal Reason and Nature of Things, and that all Rational Creatures are naturally obliged to conform themselves in all their Actions, to the eternal Rule of Reason; it will from thence follow, that there are unchangeable moral Obligations, or Laws of Nature, respecting Man's Behaviour towards the Supreme Being, whose Creature and Subject he is, as well as towards his Fellow Creatures. And if right Reason be the same Thing, though

^r Coelestium [for so it should be read, and not Coelestem] ergo admirabilem ordinem, incredibilemque constantiam, ex qua conservatio & salus omnium omnis oritur, qui vacare mente putat, is ipse mentis expers habendus est. Cic. de Nat. Deor. lib. 2. cap. 21.

^f Esse præstantem aliquam æternamque naturam & eam suspiciendam admirandamque hominum generi, pulchritudo mundi ordoque rerum coelestium cogit confiteri. Cic. de Divinat. lib. 2. in fine.

^t Primus Deorum cultus est Deos credere, &c. Vide Senec. Epist. 95.

in infinitely higher Degree, in God, as in other rational Beings; it must also necessarily be his Will, that all Creatures should act according to their moral Obligations: And consequently, as there are natural evil Consequences attending upon the Perversion of the natural Order of Things, and manifest Evils and Inconveniences both to Society and private Persons, flowing from the Transgression of the moral natural Law; so it cannot be consistent with the Divine Reason, which is infinite Wisdom, to make no difference between those that chuse to act agreeably to the moral Nature of Things, and those that wilfully act otherwise; that is, he cannot have the same Regard for those who disown his Being and Providence, as for those who own and obey him.

THERE is no occasion to suppose any Malice, or any Defect of Goodness in the Divine Nature, for making this Difference, which the very Nature of Things makes: And it is far from being the Perfection of Goodness, to make those equal, whose Merits, or moral Actions, are unequal. And if this Way of arguing, from the Notion of God's Goodness, were just, then for the same Reason he ought never to suffer any Man to be miserable, whatever his Demerits are. But we see in fact, that he has done it; and these Miseries are real Punishments upon Mankind, for their wilful transgressing the Laws of Reason and Nature: So that we must either deny that there is any Supreme Mind governing the World, or believe it consistent with his infinite Goodness to punish those, that is, suffer them to be miserable, who deny his Being, if he is a Being to whom we have any natural Relation or Obligation.

AND thus Men may certainly be under a natural Obligation to the Belief of a God, and may make themselves incapable of receiving any Good from him by an obstinate Denial of his Existence, since, upon the Acknowledgment of his Existence, depends all the Sense of natural Duty that we can owe him. And farther, whoever denies the Being and Providence of God, must necessarily own, that he lives in a distracted Universe, where there is nothing of good or lovely to be depended on, because there is no wise or intelligent Mind to order and govern it. And the forementioned Author, drawn by the mere Force of Truth, owns, "that such an Opinion as this may by Degrees embitter the Temper, and not only make the Love of Virtue to be less felt, but help to impair and ruin the very Principle of Virtue, viz. *Natural and kind Affection*; and that 'tis scarce possible to prevent a natural Kind of Abhorrence and Spleen, which will be entertained, and kept alive, by the Imagination of so perverse an Order of Things:" And in conclusion, "that Virtue cannot be compleat without Piety, since, where this is wanting, there can neither be the same Benignity, Firmness, or Constancy, the same good Composure of the Affections, or Uniformity of Mind. And thus the Perfection and Height of Virtue, (even in his Judgment) must be owing to the Belief of a God."

AND now upon the whole, if that *Abhorrence* and *Spleen*, which he allows to be the natural Result of *Atheism*, be indeed a Plague and Punishment to him that falls under it, as it certainly is; then Men have Reason to dread the Consequences of such an Opinion, which can promise no Good, and may be the Cause of many unforeseen Evils, as long as the Mind itself shall exist. And if, moreover, the supreme Governour of the World cannot but testify his Favour and Displeasure, according as rational Creatures act, for or against the Obligations of their rational Nature; then this Favour or Displeasure must shew themselves some time or other, in different Effects upon those rational Agents, according as they use their natural Liberty of acting, well or ill; unless we imagine, that moral Perfections in the Divine or Supreme Being, have no manner of Analogy to moral Perfections in other rational Beings, which is to destroy all manner of Argument from the Nature of Things.

So that both from the Consideration of the natural and necessary Difference of Good and Evil, and the different Consequences resulting from them; and also from the

^a *Enquiry concerning Virtue*, p. 70. ^w *Ibid.* p. 73.

Leng. Consideration of the moral Attributes and Perfections of the Supreme Being, different Events of different Actions, and of different habitual Regards towards that Supreme Being, are justly to be expected by every rational Agent. But if, by reason of the great Mixture, Variety, and Complication of Cases, these Events cannot at present be applied distinctly, in just Proportion, to every particular Man, as we plainly see in Fact they neither are nor can be; then it is no way inconsistent with Divine Goodness, how infinite soever, to suffer such Distinction, as is agreeable to the moral Attributes of the Deity, to have its due effect hereafter; that is, to assign a future Time of rewarding and punishing, wherein every Thing shall be as well adjusted in the Moral World, as we can now discover Things to be in the Natural.

THIS is reasonable to be expected, from the clearest Notions we can frame of Divine Perfection:

BUT how it will be done particularly, we must either be ignorant 'till that Time comes, when the Distinction shall be finally made, and the present Complication of Things unfolded; or we must, in the mean time, learn it from the Divine Being himself, some way discovering his Design or Will to us in this Matter.

AND this will naturally lead us to consider, whether he has made any particular Discovery of his Will to Man; that is, whether there be really any such Thing as a Divine Revelation. Of which Matter, I shall, with God's Assistance, speak farther hereafter.

S E R M O N X.

Preached *February* the 3d, 1717-18.

ISAIAH ii. 3.

And many People shall go, and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the Mountain of the LORD, to the House of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his Ways, and we will walk in his Paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the Word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

IT may be observed, that these very Words, as also those which go before, and those which follow them, are made use of by the Prophet *Micah*^a, who lived in the same Age with this Prophet *Isaiah*; which makes them the more remarkable. And that they are a Prophecy, relating to the Times of the *Messias*, or Kingdom of *Christ*, as is evident from that mention of the *last Days* with which they are introduced, is, I suppose, generally agreed. And that they are intended, to signify such a Disposition in Men's Minds, and such a State of Things, when many People of different Nations should be inquisitive about that Revelation of the Will of God, which was to have its Beginning among the People of the *Jews*, is plain from the Words themselves. But my Design, at present, is not to enquire exactly, either into the particular Time to which these Words of the Prophets immediately refer, or into the particular Manner in which they are most compleatly fulfilled, under the Gospel Dispensation; whether at the first Promulgation of it, which begun from *Jerusalem*, or at the further bringing in of the rest of the Gentile World, with the more full and entire Conversion of the *Jews*, to the Faith of *Christ*: Which from many Passages, both of the Old and New Testament, is justly expected to be accomplished one time or other, as the Providence of God shall make way for it.

WHAT I now intend, is only to make use of the Words with a more general View, as they express a sincere Desire in many different People, of being better informed in the Mind and Will of God, by some particular Revelation from himself, than they could be by the mere natural Light of their own Minds, reflecting only upon the general Works of Creation and Providence. And from viewing them in this Light, I shall take occasion to observe the following Particulars:

I. THAT every rational Man, who believes a God and a Providence governing the World, is under a natural Obligation, to enquire whether God has made any particular Revelation of his Will to Men, which they are any way concerned to take notice of.

II. THAT whoever seriously makes this Enquiry, will find it reasonable to conclude, that some Revelation may justly be expected from God, considering the general State of Mankind.

^a *Micah* iv. 2.

III. THAT

Leng. III. THAT if this be so, then it is every Man's Duty, to use all the proper
 SERM. Means he can, to find out what is true Revelation, and what is only pretended.
 X.

W I. THAT every rational Man, who believes a God and a Providence governing the World, is under a natural Obligation to enquire, whether God has made any particular Revelation of his Will to Men, which they are any way concerned to take notice of.

THIS Proposition may perhaps, at first sight, seem to be altogether needless, as containing only an Assertion, which no one will offer seriously to deny: But I am afraid, that in fact, much of that which goes under the Name of *Deism*, in the World, has at the bottom no other Foundation, but either what may be justly counted a virtual Denial of this Assertion, or what will in the End revert to downright *Atheism*; that is, such Men as affect the Name of *Deists*, in opposition to all revealed Religion, either mean nothing more than mere *Atheism* by it, but only to avoid the Trouble of considering the Force of such Arguments, as lie strong against the plain Denial of the Being of a God; and so by seeming to allow them, they are willing to wave all Opposition of that kind: or else, if they do in Truth believe the Arguments for his Being, to be conclusive, and yet make no Enquiry after his Will, they must then believe his Existence only as a speculative Point; which is indeed true in itself, but which, they think, does not put them under any Obligation of acting one Way or other, in consequence of it. This kind of *Deism* is, I confess, but one remove from *Atheism* itself; because, though it owns a God, who is the Governour of the natural World, yet at the same time it considers him, as having little or no Concern for the moral World, or the Actions of Men, considered as moral or rational Agents; which is in consequence, a denying or not owning of his moral Attributes. Upon this Consideration therefore, to convince such Men of their Obligation to enquire after the Will of God, we must first desire them to consider, That *Justice, Goodness, Truth*, and all moral Perfections, are as essential to the Notion of God, or Supreme Intelligent Being, as *Wisdom* or *Power*; for they are indeed the necessary Consequences of infinite Wisdom and Power. It cannot be denied, but that there are different Things in the World, which have different Powers and Properties, different Kinds and Degrees of Perfections; and from hence, in the very Nature of Things, arise different Relations of one Thing to another, and a Fitness or Unfitness, according as different Things are applied or misapplied to one another. And there is the same natural Difference, and natural Consequence of that Difference, Fitness or Unfitness, in all Actions of every Being which can be properly called an *Agent*.

Now an infinitely wise Being, who preserves all these Things in their proper Natures, certainly knows all these different Relations of Things and Actions, with their respective Fitnesses and Consequences; or else his Understanding would be imperfect and finite. And he does as evidently will that they should be as they are, because he preserves them in their Beings; and his Will cannot be influenced by any wrong Affection, raised by any Temptation from without, to do otherwise than what he knows to be, that is, what really is, best and fittest to be done; because he is independent and omnipotent. So that *Goodness, Justice, Truth*, and all moral Perfections, must be in the Divine Nature, unless we can suppose, that he wills the Natures of Things, to be as they are, and not to be as they are, at the same time, which is a manifest Contradiction.

AGAIN, *Goodness*, in any free or rational Being, is nothing else but a Will or Disposition to communicate Happiness or Good to other Beings, according to their Capacities. Now to communicate Being itself, and a Capacity of enjoying Happiness, or Good, according to that Variety of Natures, which infinite Wisdom thought fit to make, is the very Original and Foundation of all Goodness; and to communicate this farther, according to those different Improvements which intelligent and active Beings make, by virtue of that Liberty of acting, which is essential to their Nature, is a Continuation of that Goodness. So that, in comparison

son of all other Beings which are called good, we may truly say, with our Sa- *Leng.*
viour, *that there is none good* (that is originally and essentially so) *but God* *SERM.*
only. *X.*

JUSTICE and Equity are nothing else but the Application of the proper Consequences of Actions to the Persons acting; that is, a willing that the original and essential Differences of Things and Actions, and their Relations and Fittests to one another, should be entirely preserved throughout. Now the Supreme Being, who knows all Things, and understands all Actions; that is, judges of them just as they are, will act accordingly, without Partiality or Respect of Persons; his infinite Wisdom and Power, setting him above all Possibility of being either deceived, or over-ruled in his acting. And for the same Reason, *Truth* and *Faithfulness* are necessary Attributes of the same divine Being, who can neither be mistaken in his Designs, nor hindered from doing what he intends. And the like may be said of all other moral Perfections. For, in short, the Want of or Failure in any moral Perfection, must proceed, either from a Defect of Understanding, that is, from apprehending Things to be otherwise than they really are; or from a Want of Power to act according to the Nature of Things; or from Perverseness of Will disposing him to act contrary to the true Reason, or Nature and Fitness of Things: but an eternal, intelligent, independent Being, infinitely wise and powerful, can be liable to none of these; for the two first Cases are directly, and the last, by necessary consequence, a Contradiction to infinite Wisdom and Power.

FROM hence it follows, that the moral Perfections of all Creatures must be finite and limited, and capable of continual Improvement, according to the Extent of their Wisdom and Power; but the moral Perfections of the Supreme Being, or First Cause of all Things, must be infinite and absolute. But then it does not from thence follow, that *Goodness*, *Justice*, *Truth*, and other moral Perfections, are in their Nature or Kind quite different Things in the Divine Being, from what they are in other rational Beings, but only in Degree. And this ought to be the more carefully observed, because, if *Goodness*, *Truth*, and *Justice*, and the like moral Attributes which we ascribe to God Almighty, be not the same for Kind, as they are in those Ideas which we frame of the like Perfections in rational Creatures, or in our abstracted Reasonings about them from the Nature of Things; then it is in vain to reason at all about them: since, upon such Supposition, when we say, God is *just*, or *good*, or *true*, we can have no Meaning at all, because we have no Notion or Idea of any Thing answering to the Words we utter: And this would effectually destroy the Foundation, not only of Religion but of all Morality. It certainly takes away all manner of Reasoning about the Divine Nature: For the natural Attributes of God, his Understanding and Power, are as much above us, as his moral Attributes or Perfections, and our Ideas of them as imperfect; so that if we cannot reason from the one, we cannot reason from the other.

THOSE Men therefore, who pretend to magnify Reason so much, should consider very well what it is, before they admit such a Supposition, which in effect destroys all Use of Reason itself. For if true Reason be nothing else but the real Nature of Things, and their Relations and Proportions to one another truly apprehended in the Mind to be as they are in themselves, then it must be the same for Kind in all intelligent Beings; or else in effect the same will be true and not true at the same time, which is a plain Contradiction. Of two different Minds or Understandings, which are of vastly different Abilities one above another, one may apprehend a great many more Things, together with their Natures, Consequences, and Relations, than the other does, which is of less Capacity, and so can reason farther; but those Things which both of them apprehend clearly, distinctly, and truly, as they are in themselves, they must necessarily so far apprehend alike, or else there never could be any Reasoning at all from the Nature of Things.

UPON this Principle therefore, That true Reason, as far as it reaches, is of the same Kind in all intelligent Beings, *Tully* very justly lays the Foundation of the

Leng. Law of Nature, which is nothing else but the Eternal Reason of Things, which
 S E R M. must always be the same as long as Things themselves exist. And to this pur-
 X. pose are these and the like Expressions in his first Book *De Legibus*^b: *Since there is nothing more excellent than Reason, which is the same in Man and in God, the first Relation (or Society) between God and Man, is, that of Reason: And if Reason be common to both, Right Reason is so: Which being the Law (of Nature) then there is a Law in which both agree.* And again, *“Virtue (or moral Perfection) is the same in Man as in the Divine Being. For Virtue is nothing else but Nature advanced to its highest Perfection. There is therefore (in this) a Resemblance between God and Man.* Now this is the same, in effect, as to say, that Man, in his most perfect State, *is made after the Image of God.* And much to the same purpose in his second Book *De Legibus*, he tells us^d, *This is the Judgment of the wisest Men among the Ancients, that Law (i.e. Law natural) is not any human Device, Ordinance, or Decree of any People or State; but something Eternal which governs the whole World, a perfect Wisdom in commanding what is fit, and forbidding the contrary.* So, they said, that principal and supreme Law was the Mind of God himself, commanding or prohibiting every thing, according to exact Reason and the Nature of Things: From whence that Law, which God has given to Mankind, derives its just Commendation, it being the very Reason and Understanding of one truly wise, which has a natural Aptitude to direct what is fit to be enjoined or forbidden. And again he says, *“The Force or Power, of this supreme Law, is not only of older Date than any People or Community of Men, but is coæval with God himself, who preserves and governs Heaven and Earth: For neither can the Divine Mind be otherwise than rational, nor can the Divine Reason exist without having this Power or Property of giving a Sanction to the Difference between Good and Evil.* And then observing, that some particular worthy and unworthy Actions there mentioned, were in themselves Good or Evil, before any written Law describing them to be such, by virtue of that antecedent, inward, and eternal Law of Reason, he adds, *“that it was Reason, proceeding from the Nature of Things, prompting to do Right, and restraining from doing Wrong, which did not then commence a Law when it was first put into Writing, but when it had its first Original: Now it had the same Original with the Divine Mind or Understanding.* From whence he makes this Conclusion, *“Wherefore that true and supreme Law, which has a proper Fitness to command or forbid, is the Right (or perfect) Reason of the Supreme Being.”^h*

I HAVE been the more particular in taking notice of this Opinion of Tully in the Matter before us, not only because he himself lays great Strefs upon it, and likewise affirms it to be the Judgment of the wisest Heathens before him, in deducing the true Nature of Laws from their Original: But also because it plainly shews, that those Men who now pretend to be Deists, *i.e.* to believe a God and a Providence over the natural World, and yet imagine, either that he is no way

^b Est igitur, quoniam nihil est ratione melius, eaque & in homine & in Deo, prima homini cum Deo rationis societas. Inter quos autem Ratio, inter eosdem etiam recta ratio communis est: Quæ cum sit lex, lege quoque confociati homines cum Diis putandi sumus, &c.

^c Jam verò virtus eadem in homina ac Deo est, neque ullo alio ingenio præterea. Est autem virtus nihil aliud quam in se perfecta & ad summum perducta natura. Est igitur homini cum Deo similitudo, &c.

^d Hanc igitur video sapientissimorum fuisse sententiam, legem neque hominum ingeniis excogitatam, neque scitum aliquod esse populorum, sed æternum quiddam, quod universum mundum regeret, imperandi prohibendique sapientia. Ita principem legem illam & ultimam, mentem esse dicebant omnia ratione, aut cogentis, aut vetantis Dei: Ex qua illa lex quam Dii humano generi dederunt, rectè est laudata: est enim ratio mensque sapientis ad jubendum & ad deterrendum idonea.

^e Quæ vis non modo senior est quam ætas populorum & civitatum, sed æqualis illius cælum atque terras tuentis & regentis Dei: Neque enim esse Mens Divina sine ratione potest, nec ratio divina non hanc vim in rectis pravisque faciendis habere.

^f Erat enim ratio profecta à rerum natura, & ad rectè faciendum impellens & à delicto avocans: Quæ non tum denique incipit lex esse cum scripta est, sed tum cum orta est; orta autem simul est cum mente divina.

^g Quamobrem lex vera atque princeps, apta ad jubendum & ad vetandum, ratio est recta summi Jovis.

^h And to this purpose there is a large Passage out of his third Book de Republica, preserved to us by Lactantius (lib. 6. de Vero Cultu, cap. 8.) in which he declares the Eternity and Immutability of this Law, and concludes after this manner: — Unusque erit communis quasi magister, & imperator omnium Deus ille, legis hujus inventor, disceptator, lator: Cui qui non parebit, ipse se fugiet ac naturam hominis aspernabitur, atque hoc ipso luet maximas poenas, etiam si cætera supplicia, quæ putantur, effugerit.

concerned about the Nature and Consequences of human Actions, or that we can have no such true Notion of his moral Attributes as to argue any thing from them, are not yet advanced so far in the Knowledge of the true Grounds, either of natural Religion or Morality, as thinking Men among the Heathens were. And much less can they have any Notion of governing themselves by such a Precept as that of our blessed Saviour in the Gospel, of *being perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect*,ⁱ unless it be first owned, that we are capable of understanding what the moral Perfections of God, which we should endeavour to imitate, signify, by their being of the same Nature with the correspondent Perfections in Men.

BUT now, if moral Perfections, such as *Goodness, Justice, and Truth*, do necessarily belong to the Supreme Intelligent Being; and if we can have any true Notion of such Perfections, we may then justly argue, that God Almighty does always act according to those Perfections, especially in his Dealings with rational Creatures, capable of understanding what those Perfections mean: And consequently that he considers the Actions of rational and free Agents, according to their moral Nature, as they are good or evil; that is, as they agree or disagree with the eternal Rules of Goodness, Justice, and Truth: And that he respects them accordingly, and will in due time make such a proper Distinction between them, as will evidently declare and vindicate his own moral Perfections. For if he is the Governour of the whole World, that is, of the rational as well as natural World, he will govern it according to these Perfections which are inseparable from an infinitely perfect reasonable Being. This is allowed to be a reasonable Way of arguing, even by ^kCotta the Academic in Tully, in that very Discourse where he is endeavouring to render the Stoical Arguments, for Providence over Human Affairs, uncertain and ineffectual. But then we must not from hence conclude, that he does not thus govern the World, only because at present we do not see this Difference, which we expect from the Nature of moral Good and Evil, entirely and finally made by an immediate Application of consequent Rewards and Punishments, in proportion to the respective Behaviour of every rational or free Agent. For we must remember, that we cannot see the full Extent of his Government, but only a very small Part of it; and therefore though we may argue, from the Perfection of his Nature, that he loves Righteousness and hates Iniquity, and consequently will, in the Issue of Things, treat them after a different manner; yet the Revelation of his righteous Judgment is not confined to so short a Time, or within so narrow a Compass, as the Execution of human Justice must be, which is limited by Time and Place, and must either exert itself at present, or not at all. And from hence it happens, that *Justice, Goodness*, and other moral Excellencies in Men, (even in the best human Governors) do often intrench upon and limit one another, so that they cannot all be fully exercised, for want of sufficient Compass to exert themselves altogether, and for want of sufficient Power and Knowledge of Things in the Agent. But God's Government is infinite and eternal, not limited by Time or Place; so that his Goodness and Justice, and every other Perfection, may each of them have their full Exercise, and not interfere with one another; and the due Effects of each may take place in such Season as infinite Wisdom sees most proper. Therefore before we can pass an exact Judgment upon the Justice and Goodness of his Government, we must see the whole Scheme of Providence unfolded, and all the various Dependences of Things, upon one another, set in a true Light. We must wait for the final Issue of Things, and when that is come, we may depend upon it, that the whole Management will appear just and good, even according to our most natural Notions of Justice and Goodness; that is, according to the Truth and Reason of Things all fairly stated together.

ⁱ Καὶ ἡμᾶς γὰρ ἡ αὐτὴ δόξα ἐστὶ τῷ μακαρίῳ πάντων, ὥστε καὶ ἡ αὐτὴ δόξα ἀνθρώπων καὶ Θεῶν· διόπερ γίνεσθαι τέλει ὡς ὁ πατήρ ἡμῶν ὁ ὁρῶν τέλειός ἐστι, διδασκόμεθα, &c. Origen. contra Cels. lib. 4. pag. 180.

^k Ut enim nec domus, nec respublica ratione quadam & disciplina designata videatur si in ea nec rectè factis præmia essent ulla, nec supplicia peccatis, sic mundi divina in homines moderatio profectò nulla est, si in ea discrimen nullum est bonorum & malorum, Cic. de Nat. Deor. lib. 3. cap. 35.

Leng. IF what I have hitherto said, concerning the Moral Perfections of the Divine
 S E R M. Being and their Exercise, should be thought a Digression from the Design of that
 X. Proposition upon which I first begun; I desire it may be considered, that, unless
 we be fully persuaded of the Certainty of those Attributes of God, and of the Reasonableness of arguing from them, we cannot have any firm and stable Foundation of our own moral Obligations in respect of him; because we do then in effect shut out the Divine Being from having any relation to us, as we are Men, *i. e.* moral or rational and free Agents; inasmuch as we do by consequence deny either him or ourselves to be such Agents. But on the contrary, if our rational Nature is so derived from the Divine Nature as to bear a resemblance to it, in its Capacity of acting freely according to the Nature of Things; this gives us a moral Relation to God himself, ¹ a Relation of a quite different Kind from that of all other Creatures, which have no Knowledge of him. He is indeed the Author of their Being, as well as of ours; and he governs them by his Wisdom and Power in a Way suitable to their Nature, though they are not capable of reflecting upon it. But he is a Governour of Men and all rational Beings in a Sense vastly superior, as they are capable of knowing him, and the Relation they bear to him; and by knowing it, own an Obligation of willingly conforming themselves to the Laws of his Government, which are the eternal Dictates of right Reason.

UPON this Foundation therefore, I think we may justly build that natural Obligation, which every rational Man, who believes a God and a Providence governing the World, is under, to enquire, whether God has made any particular Revelation of his Will, which Men can be any way concerned to take notice of.

FOR if we are persuaded, by the Light of Nature and Reason, that there is a Supreme Being, who made and preserves us, and from whom we received our reasonable Nature, whereby we are capable of owning him; the same Light will convince us, that there is a natural Duty of Gratitude owing from us to this Supreme Benefactor. And ^m if we are not affected with a Sense of Gratitude for these Benefits, which, even in the natural Course of Things, we constantly receive from Providence, we are not (in *Tully's* Judgment) to be reckoned in the Number of Men, that is, of reasonable Creatures. But now, since the Divine Nature is infinitely perfect and happy in itself, wherein can any Gratitude towards him approve itself? Not in giving him any thing by way of Return, because he is already possessed of all things; but in a just Acknowledgment of his infinite Perfections, and in worthily receiving and using what his Goodness gives us; that is, in employing all the Powers and Faculties, which he has given us, according to his Will and Design, however it be made known to us. And since, from the Consideration of the moral Perfections of his Nature, we are assured, that he himself chuses to act according to the highest Reason; and since it must also be his Will, that all rational Creatures should chuse the same, that is, in effect, should desire and endeavour, that their Wills should be directed by his Will, which is therefore absolutely perfect, because it always chuses according to that infinite and unerring Wisdom, which knows what is best and fittest to be done in every Case that can happen, both with respect to the present Time and all Futurity: Upon these Considerations we are certainly obliged, in Reason, to be as much acquainted with the Will of God as we can; and therefore to consider of every possible Way, whereby we may come to the Knowledge of it.

FOR thus we may argue: A constant Disposition to do according to the Will of God, upon whom we depend for our Being, and for all our Powers and Faculties

¹ Nam quod aliquibus coherent homines, è mortali genere sumpserunt quæ fragilia essent & caduca: Animum esse ingeneratum à Deo, ex quo vere vel agnatio nobis cum cœlestibus, vel genus, vel stirps appellari potest. Itaque ex tot generibus nullum est animal præter hominem quod habeat notitiam aliquam Dei.— Ex quo efficitur illud ut is agnoscat Deum qui unde ortus sit quasi recordetur ac noscat. Jam vero virtus eadem in homine ac Deo est, neque ullo alio ingenio præterea.— Est igitur homini cum Deo similitudo. Quod cum ita sit, quæ tandem potest esse proprior certiorve cognatio. *Cic. de Leg. lib. 1.*

^m Quem vero astrorum ordines, quem dierum noctiumque vicissitudines, quem mensium temperatio, quemque ea, quæ gignuntur nobis ad fruendam, non gratum esse cogunt, hunc hominem omnino numerare qui decet? *Cic. de Leg. lib. 2.*

of acting, is an absolutely fit and reasonable Instance of our Gratitude towards him. *Leng.*
This is the very Perfection of *Piety*, which we may, with ^a *Tully*, call *Justice* *SERM.*
towards God; since it is nothing else but ascribing to him, in the most effectual *X.*
manner, that Honour of his infinite Perfections, which is justly due to him, by
conforming ourselves to them. Now this Disposition, to conform ourselves con-
stantly to the Will of God, must necessarily include, or presuppose, an Endeavour
to know what this Will is, and by Consequence to enquire, what Ways he has
thought fit to make any Part of it known to us: [unless we are beforehand cer-
tain, that it is impossible for him to discover it any other way, but this one which
we call the Way of Nature, ° which, as I shall have occasion to shew hereafter,
we cannot be.]

FOR though we may depend upon it, as his Will, that we should never act con-
trary to the Rules of Goodness, Truth, and Justice, because whatever is evidently
contrary to these, contradicts his very Nature, and cannot be his Will; and though
he has given us the Faculty of Reason, whereby to distinguish Good from Evil,
and a Liberty to chuse according to that Distinction; yet, because our Under-
standings are limited, so that we are not always able presently to see that entire
Connection which one Action has with another, but, without the utmost Atten-
tion, may be apt to mistake Appearances for Truth, and to act accordingly, (espe-
cially in Matters of Religion or Intercourse with the Divine Being) whereby we
may run into great Confusion, as we see in fact the greatest Part of Mankind have
done: We cannot but think it reasonable, to wish or desire a more particular Di-
rection, if it may be had, from that Being himself, who cannot be mistaken.
And this at least ought to put us upon Enquiry, whether this Being has, any
where, made any such Discovery, as will either give us greater Light into our
Duty, or direct us to better Assistance or clearer Motives to the steady Performance
of it. And here it was that the generality of Mankind first began to fail. Even
the Philosophers themselves, of almost all Sects, neglected to *seek after God* in this
respect: *They did not glorify him as God*, by owning his moral Perfections to such
a Degree as they ought to have done. Their *Piety* seldom went so far as either
to pray unto him, or to give him Thanks for their own Improvement in Virtue
or moral Perfection. In this they depended too much upon themselves and their
own natural Abilities, and made their chief Application to the Deity only for
Things of an inferior Nature. Their Opinion was too much like that of the
Poet:

— *Satis est orare Jovem quæ donat & aufert ;*
Det vitam, det opes: æquum mî animum ipse parabo.º

And *Cotta*, in ^a *Tully*, represents it as a general Doctrine: *Virtutem nemo unquam acceptam Deo retulit; i. e.* No Man thinks himself beholding to God for his Vir-
tue: And he commends the Opinion as *right, because* (says he) *to be virtuous is*
just Matter of Praise, which it could not be if it were the Gift of God; with
much more to the same purpose, which he sums up after this manner: *Judicium*
boc omnium mortalium est, fortunam à Deo petendam, à se ipso sumendam esse sa-
pientiam. And thus, according to *St. Paul*, *Professing themselves wise, they be-*
came Fools; and by forsaking the true Knowledge of God, they were led away to
all manner of Immorality. For, *as they did not like to retain God in their Know-*
ledge, God gave them over to a reprobate Mind; a Mind that could not sufficiently
distinguish between Good and Evil, but easily drawn to do those Things which are
not convenient.

THE fatal Consequence which attended this Neglect of Application to God for
true Wisdom to direct Men in the moral Conduct of their Lives, may shew us
our Obligation, in Interest as well as Duty, to enquire seriously, Whether God has
any Way afforded Means of further Light, than what we ourselves can collect
from unassisted natural Reason, to direct us in attaining the utmost Knowledge

^a Est enim pietas Justitia adversum Deos. *Cic. de Nat. Deor. lib. 1. cap. 41.*

^º See the following Sermon. ^p *Horat. Ep. 18. lib. 1.* ^q *De Nat. Deor. lib. 3. cap. 36.*

Leng. of his Will. And this should now lead me to consider the Second Thing which
 SERM. I proposed to speak to, *viz.*

X.

II. THAT whoever seriously makes this Enquiry, will find it reasonable to conclude, that some Revelation may justly be expected from God, considering the general State of Mankind.

BUT because I cannot go through with the full Consideration of this at present, I shall forbear to enter upon it; and shall rather chuse to conclude this Discourse with an earnest Exhortation to all such as, by the Principles of Reason, are convinced of the Being of God and his moral Attributes, That they would live up to this Light of their own Reason in their further Enquiry after the Revelation of the Will of God.

'Tis owned on all Hands, that Passion, and Prejudice, and Partiality arising from unruly Lusts and Appetites of any Kind, are great Impediments to the finding and embracing of Truth, especially such Truth as is likely to contradict those prevailing Passions. And therefore, if we are honest and sincere in our Searches after Truth, we must first free ourselves from these Impediments; that is, we must live so as not to have any Biass upon our Minds against the Practice of Religion, if, upon Enquiry, we should find Reason to believe its Principles true. This is but a very reasonable Thing to desire, of those who allow the steady Practice of all Virtue to be the Happiness and Perfection of Human Nature, at the same time that they question or doubt of the Truth of all Revealed Religion, as divers of the Heathen Philosophers held, and some of those who pretend to be their great Admirers would still seem to hold. Such Men cannot say, that we desire any Thing of them against their own professed Interest. Nay, considering the Advantage which the Belief of the Principles of Religion may be of, to support them under any untoward Circumstances of Discouragement, one would think they could hardly take it amiss of us, if we should even entreat them to admit those Principles, for probable at least, and to practice accordingly, 'till by serious Enquiry they could discover them to be false. But some Men are so perverse, as to interpret any thing of this kind to be an unjust Prejudice in Favour of Religion. An Author, whom I have had occasion formerly to mention, tells us, 'That, "It is the most beggarly Refuge imaginable, which is so mightily cried "up, and stands as a great Maxim with many able Men, *That they should strive "to have Faith and believe to the utmost: Because if after all, there be nothing "in the Matter, there will be no Harm in being thus deceived; but if there be "any Thing, it will be fatal for them not to have believed to the full.* But, (says "he) they are so far mistaken, that whilst they have this Thought, 'tis certain "they can never believe, either to their Satisfaction and Happiness in this World, "or with any Advantage of Recommendation to another. For besides that our "Reason, which knows the Cheat, will never rest thoroughly satisfied on such a "Bottom, but turn us often a-drift, and toss us in a Sea of Doubt and Perplexity; "we cannot but actually grow worse in Religion, and entertain a worse Opinion "still of a Supreme *Deity*, whilst our Belief is founded on so injurious a Thought "of him."

Now indeed, if those *able Men*, as he calls them in way of Derision, had either desired us to believe against our own certain Knowledge, or had, by Pretence of this Argument, discouraged us from enquiring into the Grounds of Religion, or the Motives to believe it; then there might have been some Colour for this untoward Reflection. But when they only represent the Case of Religion as it really stands, *viz.* That the Principles of it give a just Prospect of great Advantage, both present and future, to the Mind of Man, if they be true, and be believed, and in Practice owned to be so; and that there can be no possible Disadvantage, in the future at least, to such as are willing to live virtuously, from the present Belief of them, even though they should in the end prove to have been in a Mistake;

I cannot see how we could reasonably advise a wise Man to act otherwise than on the safe Side, 'till he could, to his own Satisfaction, evidently prove, that the contrary was true. For this is, in effect, only desiring them not to conclude them absolutely false, at the same time that he owns they may possibly be true. That we cannot *believe to our full Satisfaction or Happiness while we doubt*, I readily grant; but what is this to the Argument? For we must either believe the fundamental Principles of Religion to be true or false, or else we must be doubtful about them. Now though there be no Satisfaction in being doubtful, yet there may be some Hope, though mixed with Fear; and this will be some Comfort to a Man's Mind, so long as he keeps honestly to that Side where the Hope lies. But those who believe them false, can pretend to no Hope at all of what will be hereafter, but that of utter Extinction; and what Comfort can there be in that, even at present, but only to those who are already incurably miserable, and must be so as long as they do exist? This is certainly a very unhappy Cure for Doubt and Perplexity, which can never mend our Case while we are sensible of it. Admitting the Opinion of those, who think that Death puts an utter End to our Being, to be true, What Ground can it give them (as *Tully* says) *either of Joy or Boasting*? If therefore there be no entire Satisfaction, in doubting about the Being of a Providence, and a future State; nor any Comfort to a rational Mind, in the utter Disbelief of them; then certainly, if we could by any means arrive at a full Persuasion of the Truth of them, it would be a very desirable Thing. And therefore to apply this Argument, to persuade Men not to be unconcerned in the serious and honest Examination of the Grounds of Religion, nor to be obstinate, in standing out against reasonable Evidence, even though it should fall short of strict Demonstration, is no putting a *Cheat upon our Reason*, because there is a Necessity of acting one way or other. Nor can I see, how it is any *injurious Thought of the Deity*, for a Man to think it more for his Happiness, to believe that there is such an infinitely perfect Being, than not, even while he doubts of his Existence, (supposing it possible for a Man honestly to doubt of it.) Is it any Dishonour to that *Being*, for us to think, that if he do exist at all, he is so good as to make it our Interest to believe his Existence; or is it any Means of making us *entertain a worse Opinion of the Deity*, to believe that the moral Perfections of *Justice, Goodness, and Truth*, belong to him, and that he makes a real Distinction between Good and Evil, if he govern the World?

I HAVE been induced to take notice of this Passage, because it seems to be directly pointed at an Argument, which some of the best and most judicious Writers (both *Heathens* and *Christians*) have made use of to persuade Men, not to be averse to the Belief of a God and a Future State, taken from the Advantages of that Belief both to Virtue and Happiness, even supposing the Case to be only probable, or as yet doubtful. And whatever the Admirers of this Author may think, there is so just a Foundation in Reason for this Way of arguing, that it will not be the less used or valued by any considerate Man, for the unworthy Reflection which he has made upon it. And, indeed, to do him right, when he is in a better Humour, he himself is pleased to make use of the same Argument in effect, though put into other Words, when he tells us, "that by virtue of the BELIEF

^f Præclarum autem nescio quid adepti sunt qui didicerunt, se, cum tempus mortis venisset, totos esse perituros. Quod ut sit — quid habet ista res aut lætabile aut gloriosum? *Cic. Tuscul. Disp. lib. 1. cap. 21.*

^g Of Heathen Authors I shall only mention Tully and Plato. Tully, besides the forementioned Place in his Tusculan Questions, has also this Passage in the Conclusion of his Cato major: His mihi rebus, (i.e. from several Considerations depending upon the Soul's Immortality) levis est fenectus, nec solum non molesta, sed etiam jucunda. Quod si in hoc erro, quod animos hominum immortales esse credam, lubenter erro: Nec mihi hunc errorem, quo delector, dum vivo, extorqueri volo. Sin mortuus (ut quidam minuti philosophi censent) nihil sentiam, non vereor ne hunc errorem meum mortui philosophi irrideant. To this purpose, Plato, in the Person of Socrates, in divers Places, particularly in his Phædo, pag. 91. Ed. Serrani: Λογίζομαι γὰρ, ὃ φίλε ἑταῖρε, (καὶ θάσσαι ὡς πλεονεκτικῶς) εἰ μὴ τυχεῖται ἀληθῆ ὅτι ἂν ἐγὼ λέγω, καλῶς ὅτι ἔχει τὸ παρῶν· εἰ δὲ μὴδὲν ἐστὶ τελευτήσαντι, ἀλλ' ὅτι τὸν γὰρ ἡ χρονοῦ αὐτοῦ τὸ πρὸς τὸ θάνατον ἦτορ τοῖς παρῶσι ἀποδίδωκεν ὁδὸν ὁδὸν, &c. And again, pag. 114. Ἀλλὰ τὸν δὲ ἐνέκα καὶ ὅτι διελθὺν ἀνθρώπου, ὃ Σιμμία, πάντα ποιεῖν, ὥστε δριττὴς καὶ τελευτήσαντος ἐν τῷ βίῳ μέλλειν, καλὸν γὰρ τὸ ἀθλόν, καὶ ἡ ἐλπίς μεγάλη· τί μὴ ἐν ταῦτα διχυρῶσαι ὥτως ἔχειν, ὡς ἐγὼ διελθὺν, εἰς πρῶτον ἔχοντι ἀνδρὶ· ὅτι μὴ τοῖς ἡ ταῦτα ἐστὶν ἡ ταῦτ' ἀτλαστέας ψυχὰς ἡμῶν καὶ τὰς οἰκτίρας, ἐπείπερ ἀθάνατον γὰρ ἡ ψυχὴ φαίνεται· ἔσται, τὸτο καὶ πρῶτον ἐμοὶ δοκῇ καὶ ἄξιον κινδυνώσαι, οἰομένη ὥτως ἔχειν· καλὸς γὰρ ὁ κίνδυνος, καὶ καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα ὡς ἐπὶ ἐπὶ αὐτῶν.

^a Enquiry concerning Virtue, pag. 71.

Leng. of a World to come, a Man may retain his Virtue, even under the hardest Thoughts
 SERM. of Human Nature. And speaking of Religious Affection, he says, that ^w if the
 X. Subject and Ground of this divine Passion be not really just and adequate, (the Hy-
 ~~~~~ potthesis of Theism, i. e. the Existence of a God, being supposed false) the Passion  
 still in itself is so far natural and good, as it proves an Advantage to Virtue and  
 Goodness. But if, on the other side, the Subject of this Passion be really adequate  
 and just, (the Hypothesis of Theism being real, and not imaginary) then is the Pas-  
 sion also just, and becomes absolutely due and requisite in every rational Creature.  
 Now what is this but arguing for Religious Affection, or the Admiration of the  
 Divine Order of Things (which he might have called Faith if he had pleased)  
 from its <sup>x</sup> Advantage to Virtue, even though the Subject of it should in the end  
 prove not to have been *real*, but *imaginary*? And why may not another Man en-  
 deavour to persuade Men to live according to Virtue and Religion, from the same  
 Topick, even though it be put into plainer Language?

BUT to conclude; There is no considerate Man, but who would willingly be  
 satisfied in Matters of so great Moment, as the Principles of Religion; and there-  
 fore every Man ought to take the surest Way of attaining that Satisfaction, by pre-  
 paring himself to entertain Truth with a sincere Love of it; that is, by living so  
 that no Truth may ever be ungrateful to him. There is a great Affinity between  
 Virtue and Truth; and the surest Way to find the one, is by the sincere Practice of  
 the other. Let us therefore lay aside all Passion and Prejudice, and every irregular  
 Desire, which may hinder us from being impartially willing to obey every reason-  
 able Obligation, which the Discovery of Truth can lay upon us: And if we are al-  
 ready got so far as in Earnest to believe a God, and that the Practice of Virtue or  
 moral Rectitude is his Will, but yet want farther Satisfaction as to the Truth of  
 Revelation; let us first *do the Will of God* as far as we know, and *then we shall*  
*know whether the Doctrine be of God.*

*And may the Father of Lights, and God of all Truth, direct us all in our sincere*  
*Endeavours after the Knowledge of his Will.*

<sup>w</sup> Enquiry concerning Virtue, pag. 76.

<sup>x</sup> Pag. 75.



# S E R M O N XI.

Preached *March* the 3d, 1717-18.

ISAIAH ii. 3.

*And many People shall go, and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the Mountain of the LORD, to the House of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his Ways, and we will walk in his Paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the Word of the LORD from Jerusalem.*

I N my last Discourse, I took occasion from these Words to consider;

I. THAT every Rational Man, who believes a God and a Providence governing the World, is under a natural Obligation, to enquire whether God has made any particular Revelation of his Will to Men, which they are any way concerned to take notice of.

Leng.  
SERM.  
XI.

I SHALL now proceed to consider the Second Thing, which I then proposed to speak to; *viz.*

II. THAT whoever seriously makes this Enquiry, will find good Reason to conclude, that some Revelation may justly be expected from God, considering the general State of Mankind.

THIS is a Point which deserves to be very seriously considered, because it is the very Point, upon which all those who can be truly called *Deists*, begin to divide from such as believe a Divine Revelation. For he that believes a God and a Providence governing the World, and observing the Actions of Men, as every one must do that can properly be called a *Deist*, and yet denies the Truth of all Revelation, must of necessity, either hold it unreasonable either to believe or expect any such Revelation at all from God, upon any account; or else he must imagine, that there may hereafter be some true Revelation, though all that have hitherto been pretended to, be false. As to this latter Case, I think there will be no occasion to say any thing; because, I believe, there are none of those, who deny the Truth and Certainty of all past Revelation, who do in earnest believe it probable, that there ever will be any other: Or if there should be any such Persons, the Course of those Arguments, which are generally used to prove the Truth and Excellency of the Christian Religion, will plainly shew them their Mistake, by letting them see, how unreasonable it is to expect greater Evidence in this World for any possible future Revelation, than what we already have for the Christian.

My Business therefore at present, is only with those Men, who profess neither to believe nor expect any other Revelation of the Will of God to Mankind, besides what the ordinary Course of his Providence, in the outward Government of the World, discovers to every Man's Mind, but think such Belief or Expectation unreasonable. Now they that are of this Opinion, must either think, that it is



*Leng.* impossible, in the Nature of Things, that God should make any such Revelation ;  
 S E R M. or, at least, that it is highly improbable that he ever does make any : or else, that  
 XI. Mankind has no Occasion or Necessity for any such Revelation, and therefore need  
 never enquire after it.

IN opposition, therefore, to this Kind of Reasoning, I shall endeavour to shew ;

*First*, THAT in the Nature of Things, there is no *Impossibility* that God should make a particular Revelation of his Will to Men.

*Secondly*, THAT, considering our natural Notions of the Goodness of God, there is no Reason to think it *incredible* that he should, at some time or other, make such Revelation.

*Thirdly*, THAT, considering the general Condition of Mankind, such Revelation is by no means *unnecessary*.

*First*, THAT in the Nature of Things, there is no *Impossibility* that God should make a particular Revelation of his Will to Men.

THEY that deny the Possibility of it, ought to shew that it implies some Contradiction, arising from the Consideration, either of the Nature of Man, to whom such Revelation is supposed to be made, or of God, who is supposed to make it : For otherwise, the mere Difficulty of conceiving the Manner how it is made, or our not seeing it often done, so as to make it common or familiar to us, is no Objection to the Possibility of it. But now, that God should upon some Occasions communicate his Will to Men in a particular Manner, implies nothing contradictory, either to the Nature of Man or God. For if we believe, that God is the Maker of Mankind, and that from him they received their Reason and Understanding, with all the Powers and Faculties of their Mind, and all other Powers whatsoever, whereby they are capable either of communicating their Thoughts and Intentions one to another, or of receiving such Communication one from another, notwithstanding that the Agent or Mind, thus communicating its Thoughts, is itself invisible ; then it is unreasonable to suppose, that the Mind of Man is incapable of receiving any Impression, of Revelation or Instruction, from the Supreme Mind, only because that Supreme Mind is of an invisible Nature. And it is yet much more unreasonable, to suppose any Incapacity in the Divine Being, of making such Discovery of his Will to the Mind of Man, as his Wisdom sees fit ; for this would, in effect, be to deny the Perfection of his Nature, and to make him a Being not acting freely, but by Necessity, without Liberty or Choice : and this in the End comes to the same thing, as denying him to be an intelligent Being<sup>a</sup>, and must at last recur to downright Atheism. For, indeed, What Difference is there between denying the Existence of God, and denying those Attributes, which are essential to an infinitely wise and powerful Being ; whereby though the Name of God be retained, yet the Nature of an infinitely perfect Being, intended by that Name, is infinitely confounded and lost. But I suppose those, with whom I am now discoursing, willingly to own more than the mere Name of a *Deity* ; and therefore may desire them to consider, the Absurdity which would follow, from the denying a Possibility of his discovering his Will to Mankind, whatever the Occasion be, in any supernatural Way, not inconsistent with his infinite Perfections, or moral Attributes. Indeed, that the divine Majesty or Essence of God should, at any Time, be seen by mortal Eyes, implies a Contradiction to his Nature ; because it would suppose him to be finite, and limited to a particular Figure and Place, at the same time that we own him to be infinite, and every where present, that is, without Figure. But then, that he who is every where present, and works all Things according to the Counsel of his own Will, doing whatever he pleases, both in Heaven and Earth, should have no means of dis-

<sup>a</sup> See Dr. Clarke's *Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God*, Propos. 8, 9.



covering his Will to intelligent Creatures, whom he has made capable of understanding the Mind and Will of each other, is a Thing utterly repugnant to any just and consistent Notion of his infinite Power. What the Psalmist says, *He that planted the Ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the Eye, shall he not see? he that chastiseth the Heathen, shall he not be correct? he that teacheth Man Knowledge, shall he not be know?* carries in it a natural Argument, which may be extended to the Case we are now upon. He that hath given to Man, not only the Use of Senses, whereby he is able to perceive outward Objects, but also an inward Understanding, whereby he is capable of apprehending such Things as are not Objects of Sense, has not He Power to convey any Knowledge from himself to that Understanding, but only by such Means as we prescribe to him? and is he not able to convince the Mind of Man as effectually, of the Truth of what is conveyed to it, in an extraordinary Way, as it can be convinced of any other Truth of Things that are without itself? Leng. XI. Psal. xciv. 10.

BUT I need not insist longer upon the Possibility of a Thing, which the Generality of Mankind in all Ages have, not only owned to be possible, but which they have also, as I shall shew by and by, acknowledged in Fact actually to be. And therefore I proceed to observe,

Secondly, THAT, considering our natural Notions of the Goodness of God, there is no Reason to think it *incredible*, that he should at some Time or other make such Discovery of his Will.

I WOULD not here be so understood, as if I thought that we could justly conceive God Almighty to be under any Obligation to make such particular Revelation to Men: because considering the ungrateful Returns and the unworthy Use which the Generality of Men have too commonly made of that natural Light which God affords to all, they have no Reason to expect any supernatural Revelation as Matter of Right; yet considering the infinite Goodness of the Divine Being, so many Ways expressed towards them beyond their Deserts, they may have Ground to hope for it from his Mercy, and to believe that the Thing is not improbable; especially when we consider, That in all Ages of the World Men have ever had such an Apprehension. Now it is certainly more agreeable to the Goodness of God to suppose, that there is really at the bottom some Foundation for such an Apprehension, than to think that Mankind should always be under such a Delusion, as constantly to believe and expect a Thing for which there never was any Ground or Occasion given. That Men should mistake in making false Deductions from a true Principle, or that they should ground many Errors, one after another, upon one Truth misapprehended or corrupted, is not to be wondered at; for it is a common Thing: But that they should generally, in all Ages and Countries, fall into the Belief of a Thing, upon which so much of their practical Conduct depends, and yet that there should never, in any Age or Country, have been any Probability of Fact or Reason to induce them to it, is a Thing that can hardly be reconciled with common Sense to suppose.

Now that, in all Ages and Countries, there has been, Time out of Mind, a common Persuasion, that God did communicate his Will to Mankind, in some Way or other more than the general Way of Nature, is a Thing so notorious in all Antiquity, that I think no one will go about to deny it: And the farther we go backwards towards the most ancient Times, still so much the more strong and prevailing was that Persuasion. Tully, in his Preface to those Treatises, wherein he endeavours to set in the best Light, not only all that could be said for, but also all that could be said against the several Sorts of Divination or Propheying which were pretended to among the Heathen, tells us, *That it was a constant and prevailing Opinion, derived down from the remotest Antiquity, or first Ages of the*

<sup>b</sup> Vetus Opinio est, jam usque ab heroicis ducta temporibus, eaque & Populi Rom. & omnium gentium firmata consensu, versari quandam inter homines divinationem, quam Græci *μαντική* appellant, id est, præsentationem & scientiam rerum futurarum, &c. Cic. de Divinat. lib. 1.



Leng. World, and confirmed by the unanimous Suffrage of all Nations, <sup>c</sup> as well those  
 SER M. which were most learned and polite, as those which were most rude and barba-  
 XI. rous; that there was among Men such a Thing as Prophecy, or Foreknowledge and  
 Prediction of future contingent Events. And he gives it as his Opinion, <sup>d</sup> that  
 the Ancients came into this Persuasion, not so much by Reason and Argument, as by  
 Evidence of Fact and Experience. That is, they were convinced by the Events of  
 Things, which had been foretold, that the Divine Being did sometimes communi-  
 cate the Knowledge of Things future, which could not otherwise have been na-  
 turally known to Men. And though the immediate Conveyance of this Fore-  
 knowledge was by them supposed to be made to Men by Powers inferior to the  
 Supreme Deity, yet they owned, that ultimately those Powers derived their Know-  
 ledge of Futurity from the Supreme; as appears from that Passage of the Poet<sup>e</sup>:

*Quæ Phæbo Pater Omnipotens, mihi Phæbus Apollo  
 Prædixit —*<sup>f</sup>

And upon this Persuasion they all had recourse to Oracles in difficult Cases, as is  
 sufficiently known to all that have any manner of acquaintance with ancient Hi-  
 story. And that they did not think the mere foretelling of future Events was all  
 the Revelation, which they might expect from God, is evident from hence, That  
 there never yet was any Nation but what had some Sort of Revealed Religion, real  
 or pretended, among them, which gave them some Direction about their Worship  
 or Intercourse with the Heavenly Powers<sup>g</sup>: And that they generally believed the  
 first Founders of Kingdoms and Commonwealths, to have received some kind of  
 Instruction from the Gods, for the future Establishment of their Government and  
 Laws, especially in Matters of Religion and Divine Worship. From hence it  
 was that *Numa Pompilius*, in the settling of his Laws for the *Roman* State, pre-  
 tended to have frequent Conferences with the Goddess *Egeria*<sup>h</sup>, and to receive  
 Direction from her: And that <sup>i</sup>*Licurgus*, during the Time that he was establish-  
 ing the *Lacedemonian* Laws and Government, made frequent Journeys to consult  
 the *Pythian* Oracle. Herein these two famous Lawgivers imitated the Method  
 which was reported to have been taken long before by *Minos* King of *Crete*, who  
 was celebrated by the Ancients for the Justice of his Government, and the Excel-  
 lence of his Laws, for the making and perfecting of which he is said to have had  
 several Conferences with *Jupiter*, and for that purpose to have gone every ninth  
<sup>k</sup> Year into *Jupiter's* Cave to receive his Instructions, and to give an Account of  
 what has been done in the former nine Years, (according to <sup>l</sup>*Plato's* Account of  
 the Tradition, who expounds the Passages of *Homer* and *Hesiod*, in which this  
 Matter is mentioned to the same purpose, in his Dialogue which bears the Name  
 of *Minos*.) By this Practice he reformed whatever was amiss, so that the Laws  
 of *Crete* continued in great Reputation for many Years after<sup>m</sup>: Insomuch that  
 those of *Sparta*, under which the *Lacedemonians* flourished so long, were very

<sup>c</sup> Gentem quidem nullam video neque tam humanam atque doctam, neque tam immanem, tamque barbaram, quæ non significari futura, & à quibusdam intelligi prædicique posse censet. *Ib.*

<sup>d</sup> Atque hæc, ut ego arbitror, veteres rerum magis eventis moniti quam ratione docti putaverunt & probaverunt. *Ib.*

<sup>e</sup> *Virg. Aeneid.* lib. 3. v. 251.

<sup>f</sup> Upon which Servius has this Remark: Simul notandum, Apollinem, quæ dicit, ab Jove cognoscere.

<sup>g</sup> Καὶ οἱ γε δεῦρ' αὖτις τὸ πρῶτον ὅτε τῶν ἐπὶ τῷ οὐρανῷ μακρῶν καὶ ἐσέμνων καὶ ἀφ' οὗτο ὁ χρησμεύων ἦν τότε πολὺς, &c. *Strabo*, lib. 16. p. 762.

<sup>h</sup> — Deorum metum injiciendum ratus est, qui cum descendere ad animos sine aliquo commento miraculi non posset, simulat sibi cum Dea *Egeria* congressus nocturnos esse, ejus se monitu, quæ acceptissima Diis essent, sacra instituire. *Liv.* lib. 1. cap. 19.

<sup>i</sup> Τὰ δ' ὅμοια ἐποίησε καὶ Λυκὸς ὁ ζῆλωτος αὐτῷ (sc. Μινῶς) πυκνὰ γὰρ ὡς εἰσὶν ἀπὸ δῆλ' ἐπιωθάνετο πρῶτον τὴν πυθίαν, ὃ προσήκει ἀρξάμενος τοῖς Λακεδαιμονίοις. *Strabo*, lib. 16. p. 762.)

<sup>k</sup> Leges suas auctoritate Apollinis Delphici confirmavit. *Cic. de Divinat.* lib. 1.

<sup>l</sup> Not for Nine Years together, as some mistake it, who do not consider the Passage of Plato.

<sup>m</sup> Τὸ γὰρ σημαίνει τὸ ἐπὶ τῷ. (*Hom. Od.* τ. v. 179.)

Ἐνέωρε βασιλεύει Διὸς μεγάλης ἀρετῆς.

σωσασίαν δ' Διὸς ἔν τ' Μινῶ· οἱ γὰρ ὅσσοι λόγοι εἰσὶ καὶ ἀρετῆς σωσασίης ἐστὶν ἐν λόγοις· ἐφοῖτα δ' ἐν δὲ ἐνάτῃ ἔτος εἰς τὸ δ' Διὸς ἀνέλεον ὁ Μινῶς, τὰ μὲν μαθησόμενος, τὰ δ' ἀπὸ δῆλ' ὅπου αὐτῇ προσέειπε ἐναιεῖναι δὲ (ἐμμεθῆκε) πρῶτον δ' Διὸς.

*Plato in Minos*, pag. 319. edit. Steph.

<sup>n</sup> Vide *Strabonem*, lib. 10. pag. 477.



much copied from them. And it is observed by *Plato*, that those two Kingdoms of *Crete* and *Sparta* were the only ones in all *Greece*, that kept from Gaming *S E R M.* and *Drinking* to Excess, which he affirms was chiefly owing to the good Institutions of this *Minos*: whose Memory was had in such Veneration, that the ancient Poets have, for his Justice and good Government, made him one of the Judges of the Dead in the other World; as they have also made *Rhadamanthus* another, who (according to <sup>a</sup> *Plato*) was a sort of Chief Justice to *Minos*, in the Administration of his Government in *Crete*. Though *Strabo* (out of *Ephorus*, an old Historian) tells us, <sup>p</sup> that there was another *Rhadamanthus* long before this, who first civilized the Island, and took the same Method of consulting with *Jupiter*, which *Minos* afterwards copied from him. That these, and the like Relations of ancient Times, which we meet withal in Heathen Authors, have a great Mixture of Fable in them, I readily grant: but that which made them so easily obtain Credit in the World, was this general Persuasion, that such Laws and Government as were most under the Divine Direction, must of necessity be most perfect; and that God did, some way or other, communicate such express Directions to Good Men. What *Strabo*, a judicious Author, remarks upon this Occasion, is worth our Observation: <sup>q</sup> *Whatever*, says he, *becomes of the real Truth of these Relations, this however is certain that Men did believe and think them true; and for this Reason, Prophets were had in such Honour, as to be thought worthy sometimes even of Royal Dignity, as being Persons that delivered Precepts and Admonitions from the Gods, both while they lived, and after their Death, such as Tiresias, Amphiraus, Trophonius, Orpheus, Musæus, &c.* It is certain, that some of these Oracles continued long in Reputation to after Ages; and were frequently applied to by Persons of the highest Rank, and best Understanding.

I KNOW there are some who now make it a great Controversy, Whether there ever was any real true Prediction delivered by these, or any other Oracles among the Heathen; and some go so far as to assert, that they were all entirely Cheat and Collusion, managed by the Artifice of crafty and designing Men. And no doubt there was a great deal of human Fraud in them; so that in very many Cases we need not look for any other Solution for those Appearances, by which the Vulgar were deluded. But yet any one, who carefully considers, what Account the very best, and least credulous of ancient Writers give of them, will find it very difficult to prove, that never any other Agents but human, had any Concern in them. There are some such express Predictions related, as cannot well, with any Modesty, be denied to have been made; nor is it so easy to account for them in the way of human Artifice, as it is to shew, how they might, by wicked Spirits, have been collected from the true Oracles of God, and then delivered as their own, to gain Credit to that Idolatrous Worship of wicked Spirits, into which, by the just Judgment of God, those Nations were fallen, which had departed from the Worship of the one true God. Nor is it easy to account for what both *Plato* and *Xenophon*, two intimate Acquaintance of *Socrates*, so particularly and expressly relate, concerning that *Genius* or *Dæmon*, which gave that good Man such frequent and remarkable Advertisements, to restrain him from any Design, whereby he was likely to fall into any Mistake or Danger.

HOWEVER, it is not necessary to my present Purpose, to enter so far into this Controversy, as to determine the Matter either way: for let all that was pretended to by these Oracles be never so much a Cheat, yet there must have been originally some Ground of Truth to build all this Cheat upon; and the stronger and more lasting the Cheat or Counterfeit was, so much the stronger must the Persuasion at first have been, of some real and true Revelation made from God. For no Counterfeit is ever attempted, or can ever hope to meet with Entertainment and

<sup>a</sup> *Plato*, ib. pag. 320.

<sup>p</sup> *Rhadamanthus* is called the Brother of *Minos* in *Plato's* first Book de Legibus, pag. 623.

<sup>q</sup> *Strabo*, lib. 10. pag. 476.

<sup>r</sup> Ταῦτα γὰρ ὅπως ποτὲ ἀληθείας ἔχει, ἀλλὰ γε τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἐπιτίσκει καὶ ἐνέομιτο, καὶ ἀπὸ τούτου οἱ μάντιες ἐτιμῶντο, ὥς καὶ βασιλεῖαι; ἀξιῶντες, ὡς τὰ ἀπὸ τῶν Θεῶν ἡμῖν ἐκδέχονται ἀγαθὰ καὶ κακά, καὶ ἐπανορθώματα καὶ ζῶντες, καὶ ἀποθανόντες, καθάπερ καὶ ὁ Τειρεσίας, &c. *Strabo*, lib. 16. pag. 762.



*Leng.* Success, but because it pretends to imitate something which has been true in a like  
*SERM.* Kind before, and owned to be so. If there had never been any real and true Coin,  
 XI. there would never have been any false or counterfeit. Errors may proceed and  
 multiply from the Corruption of any Truth, but Truth is always the oldest.  
 The first Writings of the Old Testament, may be proved, beyond Dispute, to be  
 older than any other Books now extant in the World: And in those Writings we  
 have an Account of very remarkable Revelations made to the ancient *Patriarchs*,  
 who were very considerable Men in their several Generations long before; some of  
 which, no doubt, were remembered long after. The wonderful Prediction which  
*Joseph* made, concerning seven Years of great Plenty, succeeded by seven others  
 of great Famine, which had so great an Influence over the whole Government of  
*Egypt*, and caused so great a Change of Property among them, could not easily be  
 forgotten in some Ages. And the whole History of the Life and Actions of *Moses*  
 the great *Hebrew* Lawgiver, the Miracles which he wrought, and the Revelations  
 which he received from God, and the Government which he established upon  
 them, over his own People, whom he delivered safe out of *Egypt*, in spite of the  
 strongest and most powerful Opposition of their Oppressors, were Things so re-  
 markable, that the *Egyptians*, and other neighbouring Nations, had great Reason  
 to be well acquainted with them: And from them these Notions might be very  
 easily propagated by degrees into other Parts of the World. And other Founders  
 of Commonwealths might take Hints from thence, to pretend to such extraordi-  
 nary Ways of receiving their Laws and Institutions from Heaven, as long as any  
 Tradition of the first Truth remained. And I am the rather induced to observe  
 this, from the Account which *Strabo* himself, in the fore-mentioned Place<sup>r</sup>, gives  
 of this Matter. For first, he gives a much more ingenuous Character, than *Ta-  
 citus* does, both of *Moses* and the ancient *Jewish* People: And being an *Asiatic*,  
 he had Opportunity of being better informed of their Original: And with a great  
 deal of Candour, he relates the Occasion of *Moses's* conducting *them* out of *Egypt*,  
 upon a great Dislike of the Egyptian Idolatry, and of settling a good Form of Po-  
 litical Government, and an excellent Scheme of Religious Worship<sup>t</sup>, upon the  
 Belief of one God among them, free from Image Worship and Superstition; and  
 of his promising to those who continued virtuous and religious Observers of Ju-  
 stice, "all future Good, and extraordinary or miraculous Assistance from God, but  
 no such Thing to those who were not such. He takes notice also, "that Religion  
 and the Divine Providence, were the Defence that *Moses* took for his Armour,  
 when he was in quest of a Place of Settlement for this excellent Form of Reli-  
 gious Worship. And he adds, \*that those who succeeded *Moses* for some time,  
 while they kept to this first Institution, were very just, and truly religious Men.  
 And, which is very remarkable, after the giving this Account of *Moses*, and his  
 Divine Polity, he takes occasion to mention *Minos* and *Licurgus*, and others, who  
 pretended to a divine Direction for their Institutions also; as if he intended thereby  
 to lead us into an Opinion, that they did but copy after this older and more excel-  
 lent Legislator.

AND besides all this, if we consider the scattered Remains of ancient Tradition,  
 which are to be found dispersed among the old Accounts of Heathen Nations,  
 though greatly corrupted by passing through so many Hands, and strip them of  
 that fabulous Dress, into which Poets and other Writers have put them, we may  
 see manifest Footsteps of many ancient Truths of Religion, whereof we have a  
 more plain and simple, as well as more consistent Narration, in the Books of *Moses*  
 and other sacred Writings. I shall not mention Particulars; because many Chri-  
 stian Writers, both ancient and modern, in their Defences of the Divine Authority

<sup>r</sup> Lib. 16. pag. 761.

<sup>t</sup> Ἀπῆρεν ἐκείσε ἐνθένδε διὰ χειρὸς τὰ καθιεστώτα καὶ σωεξήραν αὐτοῖς πολλοὶ τιμῶντες τὸ Θεῖον. Ἐφη γὰρ ἐκεῖνος καὶ ἐδίδασκεν, ὡς ὅτε ὁρθῶς φρονέουσιν οἱ Αἰγύπτιοι θηρίοις εἰκάζοντες καὶ βοσκήμασι τὸ Θεῖον, &c.

<sup>u</sup> Τότε δὲ τις αὖ εἰκόνα πλάττειν θαρρήσειε νῦν ἔχων ὁμοίαν τινὶ τῷ παρ' ἡμῶν· ἀλλ' ἐὰν δὲ πᾶσαν ξοανοποιῶν —

<sup>v</sup> Καὶ προσδοκᾷ δὲ τὸν Θεὸν καὶ δῶρον αἰεὶ τι εἰσημῶν τὰς σωφρονας ζωνίους καὶ μὴ δικαιοσύνης, τὰς δ' ἄλλας μὴ προσδοκᾷ.

<sup>w</sup> Ἀλλὰ δ' ἀντὶ τῶν ὅλων τὰ ἱερὰ περιβάλλει καὶ τὸ Θεῖον, ἵδρυσιν τῶν ζήλων ἀξίων, &c.

<sup>x</sup> Οἱ δὲ ἀγαθέξαρτοι χεῖρας μὲν τινὰς ἐν τοῖς αὐτοῖς διέμεναι δικαιοπραγίας καὶ θεοσεβείας ὡς ἀληθῶς ὁρίσας.



of the Christian Religion, are very copious upon this Subject. And all the mo-  
destest of the Heathen Writers themselves confess, that their first Learning and  
Philosophy, and many of their Religious Doctrines, were originally derived from  
the *Egyptians*, or other more Eastern Barbarous Nations, that is, from those who  
were more ancient than the *Greeks*. And if they had borrowed less from the  
*Egyptians*, who had been longer corrupting Original Truth; and more from others,  
who had less Superstition among them, we might have had a clearer Account of  
the most primitive Persuasions of Men, in Matters of Religion.

Now the Use which I would make of all this is, to shew, that Mankind have  
generally been persuaded, that God did really, upon great Occasions, reveal his  
Will to Men, in some particular manner or other (which they supposed there were  
several Ways of doing) for their better Instruction in Matters of Virtue and Reli-  
gion. And since they have ever, from the very Infancy of the World, as far as  
we can judge, been possessed of this Opinion, it seems most agreeable to our No-  
tions of the Divine Goodness, that such an Opinion should not always have been  
mere Delusion; but that there should both be some real Foundation for it, and  
some excellent Use to be, some time or other, made of it.

BUT because there are some who pretend, that the natural Light of our own  
Reason is entirely sufficient to direct us, in our moral and religious Conduct, with-  
out any other Assistance, so that any other Revelation or Direction from God seems  
to them altogether needless; I shall therefore now proceed to shew,

*Thirdly*, THAT, considering the general Condition of Mankind, such Revela-  
tion is by no means unnecessary.

INDEED, if the Generality of Mankind had always lived up exactly to the Prin-  
ciples of Reason, and had all of them both Leisure and Capacity sufficient to im-  
prove their natural Light to the utmost, and were always ready, in every Instance,  
to practise according to the just Consequences deducible from such Improvement;  
then there might be some Pretence for thinking any farther Assistance or Revela-  
tion unnecessary. But as the Case stands, the Matter is quite otherwise, as will  
appear from several Considerations. For,

I. IT is evident, that there is a strange and surprizing Corruption in Hu-  
man Nature; that the generality of Men have hardly ever attended duly, at any  
time, to the natural Dictates of their own Reason; and none, even of those who  
attended most to them, have yet ever done it so constantly, as not to be conscious  
that they have often deviated from what they knew to be reasonable in many In-  
stances. But much the greater Part have shewn themselves more prone to extin-  
guish than to improve the Light of Reason: And yet all pretend to it, and all,  
upon some Occasion or other, make use of it, and appeal to it. There is an un-  
accountable Mixture of Contrarieties in the Nature of Man as it now stands; the  
Seeds of something so very great and noble in his Reasoning Faculty, and at the  
same time something so very weak and disorderly in his general Use of it, that the  
most inquisitive Men have been greatly puzzled to give a true and satisfactory So-  
lution of it. There is a very lively Description of this Distemper or Sicknes of  
the Mind of Man, in *Tully's* Preface to his third Book of *Tusculan Questions*,  
wherein he tells us, that *if Nature had made us in such a manner, that we could  
have had a clear and distinct View of her, and have constantly followed her excel-  
lent Direction, then we should not so much have wanted any farther Advice or  
teaching. But now she has afforded us only some small Sparks of true Reason, which  
by corrupt Practice and perverse Opinions we so smother, that the true and uncor-  
rupt Light of Nature no where appears in its full Strengb.* I might cite many  
Passages of other Heathen Authors to the same purpose. But such Acknowledg-  
ments are frequently to be met withal, and I need not insist upon them. They  
could plainly see, that the State of Man in this World was very far from being

<sup>y</sup> Quod si tales nos natura genuisset, ut eam ipsam intueri & perspicere, eademque optima duce cursum vitæ con-  
ficere possemus; haud erat sane quod quisquam rationem ac doctrinam requireret. Nunc parvulos nobis dedit igni-  
culos, quos celeriter malis moribus, opinionibusque depravati sic restringimus ut Nusquam Naturæ Lumen appareat.



*Leng.* perfect or natural ; but how he first came into this Condition, was a Question that  
 SERM. could not be clearly resolved without farther Light than their own<sup>2</sup>. They could  
 XI. see that there were natural Seeds of Virtue in the Minds of Men, and that the  
 immediate Cause of choking those Seeds and hindering their Growth, was wrong  
 Education, depraved Custom, perverse Opinions early imbibed, Love of Pleasure,  
 Ambition, Covetousness, and the like. These were indeed the immediate Impe-  
 diments to the Attainment of Virtue, and that happy Life, which Nature directed  
 to and aspired after. But these are the Disorders of Nature in her distempered  
 Condition ; the original Cause of which they could not of themselves find out :  
 And until they knew the Cause of the Distemper, they must always be at a loss,  
 how to find a proper Means of recovering out of it. Here therefore a Revelation  
 was necessary to shew Men their true Condition. But,

2. SUPPOSE they had really known the true State of their own Case, yet the  
 true Cure for it was more than human Power or Skill could effect. Some of them  
 had recourse to Philosophy : But the Disease was too inveterate, and too epidemical  
 to be cured by so weak a Medicine. The Philosophers themselves were many of  
 them as far from being amended by their own Prescriptions as any other : Few of  
 them but what had some remarkable Defect, either in their Principles or Practices  
 of Natural Morality, as whoever reads the History of their Lives and Opinions  
 may easily see ; and the most ingenuous of them confess it. <sup>a</sup> *Tully owns, that*  
*very few of them formed their own Minds and Manners according to the Dictates*  
*of true Reason, and that their several Institutions were more an Ostentation of*  
*their Knowledge, than a Rule of their Lives.* And their Scholars, according to  
<sup>b</sup> *Aristotle's Account, learned only to discourse about Morality, but were no more*  
*bettered by it, than a Sick Man would be by hearing the Discourses of a Physician,*  
*but never using any of his Prescription.* But some of them we may suppose were  
 good and sincere Men ; yet had they been really better than they were, their Num-  
 bers were so few, and their Authority so weak, and the general Corruption of the  
 World so great, that they could never hope to make any considerable Reformation  
 in the Manners of Men. And some of the best of them did so far despair of any  
 such Effect from mere human Endeavours, that they thought it best to sit quiet,  
 and if they could keep themselves free from the Contagion of that Wickedness,  
 with which the World about them was overwhelmed, it would be enough : And  
 if any did attempt farther, they made but few Converts ; and their Influence, in  
 a great measure, died with them. So that here is no Remedy to be expected, but  
 only for a very few particular Persons out of the great Body of Mankind, from  
 the Assistance of Philosophy. And yet this is what some modern Deists think suf-  
 ficient to supersede the Necessity of all Revelation ; as if here and there a Man of  
 much Leisure, and great Abilities, and good Disposition, were all that the Divine  
 Goodness should be supposed to have any Concern for. But such Notions are  
 very unworthy of God, who is no Respector of Persons. Let it therefore be far-  
 ther considered,

3. THAT supposing the Philosophers had been really designed to reform the  
 Morals and Religion of Mankind, they were not sufficiently qualified for such an  
 Undertaking, because they themselves were ignorant of many Things necessary for  
 it. As they knew not the first Cause of the Corruption of Human Nature (which  
 I mentioned before) so they could know nothing of God's Design in suffering it,  
 nor of the Scheme and Order of his Providence, by which he designed to conduct  
 Mankind out of it, into a more perfect and happy State than that from which  
 they had fallen. Though they were upon good Grounds of Reason (while they  
 kept steady to it) convinced of some of those great Truths, which are strong

<sup>2</sup> Sunt enim ingeniis nostris semina innata virtutum, quæ si adolescere liceret, ipsa nos ad beatam vitam natura perduceret. Nunc autem simul atque editi in lucem & suscepti sumus, in omni continuo pravitate, & in summa opinionum perversitate versamur, &c. *Cic. ibid.*

<sup>a</sup> Quotus enim quisque Philosophorum invenitur qui sit ita moratus, ita animo ac vita constitutus, ut ratio postulat ? qui disciplinam suam non ostentationem scientiæ, sed legem vitæ putet ? *Cic. Tuscul. lib. 2. cap. 4.*

<sup>b</sup> 'Αλλ' οἱ πολλοὶ ταῦτα μὴ ἐπιδέχονται, ἐπὶ δὲ τὸν λόγον καταφύγοντες οἷον, φιλοσοφεῖν, καὶ ὥτως ἑαδὴ ἀπαθῆναι, ὁμοίον τι ποιῆναι τοῖς κάμνοντι, οἱ δὲ ἰατρῶν ἀκέραι μὴ ἐπιμελῶς, ποιῶσι δ' εἶναι τὸ πρῶτον ἰατρῶν, &c. *Arist. Ethic. Nicom. lib. 2. cap. 4. in fine.*



Motives to Obedience to the Law of Nature, (such as the *Immortality of the Soul* and *Leng.*  
a *Future State* of Rewards and Punishments;) yet their Conviction was not so S E R M.  
steady and uniform as was necessary to persuade others: And it may be questioned, XI.  
whether their Unsteadiness in their own Arguments, and their contradictory Opinions, and different Sects, formed upon them, did not more hinder than help that Influence which the traditional Belief of these primitive Truths had upon the Vulgar, in more early Times, before they had ever heard such disputing upon them. So that there was really more Want of Revelation after the Days of Philosophy than before. What they discoursed upon these Subjects, was too subtle and speculative, rather amusing than instructing to a common Understanding: And besides, they themselves had no consistent Scheme to proceed upon. Though they could plainly discover, from the Reason of Things, that Virtue was necessary to the Perfection of Man, yet their many Divisions and Subdivisions upon the Chief Good, or Supreme and Ultimate Happiness of Man, were a great Hindrance to any good Influence upon those that heard them. They could many of them speak very well, both upon the Excellence of a virtuous Life in general, and of the immediate Advantage of several particular Virtues, and their natural Tendency to the Good of Mankind; but how to reduce them all to one consistent Scheme, so that ordinary Men might see the Obligation to practise all of them, in all Circumstances, was a Thing that few, or none of them, could attain to.

THERE are, besides these, divers other Considerations, which shew the Necessity of a Revelation from God, in order to the effectual Reformation of Mankind, both as to Religion and Morality; which I shall have Occasion to mention in my next Discourse: when I shall likewise proceed to shew, That if Revelation be a Thing neither improbable nor unnecessary, it ought to be our main Concern to endeavour to know, where this true Revelation is to be found.



## S E R M O N XII.

Preached *March* the 3d, 1717-18.

ISAIAH ii. 3.

*And many People shall go, and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the Mountain of the LORD, to the House of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his Ways, and we will walk in his Paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the Word of the LORD from Jerusalem.*

Leng.  
SERM.  
XII.

I HAVE, in my two last Discourses, endeavoured to shew,  
I. THAT every Rational Man, who believes a God and a Providence governing the World, is under a natural Obligation, to enquire whether God has made any particular Revelation of his Will to Men, which they are any way concerned to take notice of. And likewise,

II. THAT whoever seriously makes this Enquiry, will find good Reason to conclude, that some Revelation may justly be expected to come from God, considering the general State and Condition of Mankind. And in speaking to this second Consideration, I observed,

*First*, THAT in the Nature of Things, there is no *Impossibility* that God should make a particular Revelation of his Will to Men.

*Secondly*, THAT, considering our natural Notions of the Goodness of God to Mankind, there is no Reason to think it *incredible* that he should, at some time or other, make such Revelation. And,

*Thirdly*, THAT, considering the general Condition of Mankind, such Revelation is by no means *unnecessary*; as some Despisers of all Revelation have thought fit to represent it. This I began to shew from such Considerations as these:

1. THAT there is a strange and surprising Corruption in Human Nature, which the wisest Men could both see in others, and experience in themselves, but which they were wonderfully puzzled to give any tolerable Account of: And not knowing the original Cause of it, they must always necessarily be at a Loss, how to find a sufficient Means of recovering out of it. And,

2. SUPPOSE they had really known the true State of their own Case, yet the effectual Cure for it was more than mere human Power or Skill could attain to. Philosophy, how much soever it may be magnified, was not a sufficient Cure even for those that professed it, who were at least but a small Handful of Men, and very unequal to such a vast Undertaking, as instructing and reforming the Morals and Religion of Mankind. And,

3. IF



3. IF they had really intended such a Thing, which few or none of them ever *Leng.* did, yet they were not qualified for such a Work. They neither had so steady a *SERM.* Conviction of the Truth of what themselves professed, nor were their Notions of *XII.* several necessary Truths so consistent with one another, as ever to be likely to have any great Influence upon others. To these Considerations I shall now add,

4. THAT in Matters of Religion, which naturally have the greatest Influence over the Mind of Man, and which therefore ought to be under the best and truest Direction of all others, they were still more deficient, than in any Thing else. When Mankind had once generally fallen from the Worship of the one true God, they sunk, by degrees, into the most brutal Superstition and Idolatry; which was accompanied with such an universal Blindness and Stupidity, as to the true Nature of God and his Attributes; that if some Notion of God's Existence had not been so deeply rooted in Human Nature, as never to be wholly destroyed, a general Atheism must have been the natural Consequence of such monstrous Practices. For as we find no ancient Account of any that professed Atheistical Principles, 'till Religion was so entirely degenerated from its first Original, that primitive Truth and established Falshood could not easily be distinguished; so after Things were come to this pass, we find several Pretenders to utter Infidelity. Now the Philosophers were so far from being able to make any considerable Reformation in this Matter, that, generally speaking, they made the Case much worse; not only by suffering themselves to be drawn away by the Stream of vulgar Superstition, and complying with every established idolatrous Practice, but likewise by endeavouring to find out some Distinction or other to justify it, or at least to excuse themselves in complying with it. If they could not apply some symbolical Meaning or other to the most absurd and ridiculous Ceremonies of their gross Superstition, by which they might seem to reconcile it to something that looked like Natural Religion; yet however they defended them by the Law and Practice of the Country where they lived. Thus not only the ordinary<sup>a</sup> Scholars of *Pythagoras*, but even such Men as <sup>b</sup>*Plato*, <sup>c</sup>*Cicero*, <sup>d</sup>*Epiſtetus*, and others of the most eminent Understanding among them, such as in many Places, on other Occasions, expressed very noble and sublime Sentiments, both of Morality and Religion, yet give such Precepts for following the received Customs, both in the Manner and Object of Divine Worship, as could not but greatly confirm all other less discerning Men in any Kind of Idolatry, which had but been long enough practised to plead Prescription in their several Countries.

THE *Stoics*, who valued themselves upon the Strictness of their Religion, as well as Moral Principles, by Deifying of *Nature* or the *Universe* and the several Parts even of the material World, were great Encouragers of Polytheism and Creature Worship; and by ascribing the incommunicable Name of God to any Thing, that was but the immediate Instrument of any considerable Benefit to the Life of Man, they justified the Practice of those, *who* (in Saint Paul's Language) *changed the Truth of God into a Lie, and worshipped and served the Creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever.* And thus by refining upon the *Mythological* or *Poetical Theology* of their Predecessors, they were so far from correcting the prevailing Errors of Heathen Worship, that they rather added greater Authority

<sup>a</sup> Ἀθανάτους μὲν πρῶτα θεῖς, νόμον ὡς ἀλάκειν.

Τίμα, καὶ σέβας ὄρεον· ἐπειθ' ἥρωας ἀγαυούς.

Τὴν τε καὶ λαχθονίης σέβας δαίμονας ἐννομα βέζων.

*Pythag. Aurea Carm.*

<sup>b</sup> Πρῶτον μὲν φαμέν τιμὰς τὰς μετ' Ὀλυμπίης τε καὶ τῆς ἰσχυρῆς θεῖς, τοῖς χθονίοις ἂν τις θεοῖς ἀρῆται ἐδούτερος καὶ ἀρεῖται· νέμων, ὁρρότατα δ' ἡ δούσεβας σκοπεῖ τυχεῖνοι· τοῖς δ' ἐν τῶν ἀνθρώπων τὰ περὶ τὰ καὶ ἀντίφωνα τοῖς ἐμπροσθεν ῥηθείσι νῦν δὲ· καὶ θεῖς· ὅτι τὰςδε, καὶ τοῖς δαίμοσιν ὅγ' ἐμφερων ὁρῶνται· ἂν ἥρωσι δ' ἐν τῶν ἐπακολουθεῖ δ' αὐτοῖς ἰδρύματα ἴδια παλίων θεῶν καὶ νόμον ὁρῶνται. *Plato de Leg. lib. 4. pag. 717. Which Words are an Encouragement both to publick and domestick Superstition and Idolatry.*

<sup>c</sup> Constructa à patribus delubra habento; lucos in agris habento, & Larum sedes: Ritus familiae, patrumque fervanto: Divos & eos, qui coelestes semper habiti, colunto. — *Cic. de Leg. lib. 2.*

Sacra privata perpetua manento. Deorum manium jura sancta sunt. *Ib.*

Jam illud ex institutis Pontificum & Aruspicum non mutandum est, quibus hostiis immolandum cuique Deo, &c. *Ibid.* Where may be seen much more to the same purpose, which he prescribes in the way of a perpetual Establishment.

<sup>d</sup> Σπίνδεν δ' καὶ θύειν ἐν ἀπάρχει καὶ τὰ πάτεραι, (ἐκείνοις) ἐκείνοις προσήκει, &c. *Epicl. cap. 38.*



*Leng.* to the Corruptions of it. Thus <sup>e</sup> *Balbus*, in *Tully*, commends the Wisdom of the  
 S E R M. XII. ancient *Greeks* and *Romans*, for multiplying the Number of their Gods by Deify-  
 ing almost every thing that was of great Virtue or Benefit to Mankind: And like-  
 wise for giving Divine Worship to dead Men, who had been eminent in former  
 Times, such as *Hercules* and *Romulus*, and others, <sup>f</sup> because they were now be-  
 come Immortal. And though he seems, in some measure, to condemn the vul-  
 gar Superstition of great Folly and Credulity, <sup>g</sup> because from this Physical or Na-  
 tural Theology, and the Deifying of deceased Heroes, they had taken occasion,  
 not only to introduce a Multitude of fictitious Gods, which produced many fa-  
 bulous and superstitious Opinions among them; but likewise, by Degrees, to ascribe  
 all sorts of Human Passions and Vices to their Gods; yet he concludes, that, set-  
 ting such Fables aside, the Divinity, which pervades through all Nature, might be  
 taken for several Gods in the several Parts of it, and ought to be worshipped as  
 such. *Sed tamen his fabulis spretis ac repudiatis, Deus pertinens per Naturam*  
*cujusque rei, per terras Ceres, per Maria Neptunus, alii per alia, poterunt intel-*  
*ligi qui qualesque sint, quoque eos nomine consuetudo nuncupaverit, quos Deos & ve-*  
*nerari & colere debemus.* Now here is certainly Foundation enough left for justi-  
 fying the Worship of a Multitude of ancient Deities, and even for forming new  
 ones upon Occasion.

As for the *Academics*, though they could not entirely come into the *Stoical*  
 Way of defending all this Superstition by Reason and Argument, yet they justified  
 it by Authority and ancient Establishment: For so *Cotta*, in return to that Ad-  
 vice which *Balbus* had given him, <sup>h</sup> to be, as became his Office of Pontif, a  
 Champion for the ancient Opinions about the Gods and their Worship, Ceremo-  
 nies and Religion; tells him, that he will always defend them to the last, as he  
 had ever done, though he went upon other Principles, and that nothing which  
 any Man could say should ever move him from this Resolution: *Ego vero eas de-*  
*fendam semper, semperque defendi: Nec me ex ea opinione, quam à majoribus ac-*  
*cepi de Cultu Deorum Immortalium ullius unquam oratio, aut docti aut indocti,*  
*movebit.* He was resolved to hear no Reason against the Doctrine of his Ancestors.  
 Nay, the very *Epicureans* themselves, whose great Pretence was to cure Men of  
 Superstition, by running into another Extreme, and destroying all Belief of Pro-  
 vidence, yet not only in publick fell, most of them, in with the vulgar Supersti-  
 tion, for fear of Censure, but were many of them really, in their very Hearts, as  
 superstitious as other People, however they pretended sometimes to over-act the  
 contrary. For *Tully*, in the Person of *Cotta*, tells us, <sup>i</sup> he knew some of them  
 so stupidly superstitious as to worship every little Image that came in their Way;  
 and that *Epicurus* himself, (though some, by his incorrect Manner of Writing,  
 concluded that he designed to conceal his true Opinion, and that as he denied a Pro-  
 vidence, so he really had no Belief or Fear of any Gods at all, yet) was really at  
 the Bottom more afraid of those invisible Powers, than those who never formally  
 denied their Influence. Thus in Fact confuting his own pretended Opinion, by  
 a most slavish and abject Fear of, what he denied to have any Matter of Terror

<sup>e</sup> Multæ autem aliæ Naturæ Deorum ex magnis beneficiis eorum, non sine causa, & à Gratiæ sapientissimis & à majoribus nostris constitutæ nominatæque sunt. Quicquid enim magnam utilitatem generi afferret humano, id non sine Divina Bonitate erga homines fieri arbitrabantur. Itaque tum illud quod erat à Deo natum (i. donatum) nomine ipsius Dei nuncupabant — Tum autem res ipsa in qua vis inest major aliqua sic appellatur ut ea ipsa res nominetur Deus. — Utilitatum igitur magnitudine constituti sunt ii Dii qui utilitates quasque gignebant. — *De Nat. Deor.* lib. 2. cap. 23.

<sup>f</sup> Quorum cum remanerent animi atque æternitate fruerentur, Dii rite sunt habiti, cum & optimi essent & æterni. *Ib.* cap. 24.

<sup>g</sup> Videtisne igitur ut à Physicis rebus, bene atque utiliter inventis, tracta ratio sit ad commentitios & factos Deos? quæ res genuit falsas opiniones, erroresque turbulentos & superstitiones pæne aniles, &c. — Accipimus enim Deorum cupiditates, ægritudines, iracundias, &c.

Hæc & dicuntur & creduntur stultissime, & plena sunt futilitatis, summaque levitatis. *Ib.* cap. 28.

<sup>h</sup> Non enim mediocriter moveor auctoritate tuâ, *Balbe*, Orationeque ea, quæ me in perorando cohortabatur ut meminissim me & *Cottam* esse & Pontificem; quod eo, credo, valebat, ut opiniones quas à majoribus accepimus de Diis Immortalibus, sacra, ceremonias, religionesque defenderem. —

<sup>i</sup> Novi ego *Epicureos* omnia figilla numerantes, [*al. venerantes, al. inhiantes.*] *Cic. de Nat. Deor.* lib. 1. c. 30.



in them, <sup>k</sup> *Death* and the *Deity*. Now as we may from hence justly observe, *Leng.*  
that the Belief or Fear of a Deity is so deeply engraven upon the Mind of Man, *SERM.*  
and as it were woven into Human Nature, that no assumed Principles of Philoso- *XII.*  
phy can ever be able totally to efface it: So we may likewise conclude, that none  
of all these Sects of Philosophers were capable of leading Men back to the origi-  
nal Truth of Religion, after it had been once so miserably corrupted, as it was in  
the Heathen World: And consequently that a Divine Revelation was necessary, to  
reform Men's Notions, and to reduce them to the true Practice of Religion.  
But,

5. It is farther to be observed, that divers of the wisest Philosophers, did them-  
selves confess, that they wanted a Divine Revelation to set them right, even in  
Matters which were of the utmost Consequence. They were sensible that all the  
established Religions, which they knew in the World, were exceedingly corrupted:  
And yet owned, that they saw no human Way of reforming them; the little that  
was true, being mixed with so much Falshood, that they knew not how to dis-  
tinguish them. And therefore <sup>l</sup> *Plato*, supposing Religion to be the Foundation  
of all good Government in his Commonwealth, plainly acknowledges the Necessi-  
ty of a Divine Revelation, to establish such a Worship as might be acceptable to  
God, and render him propitious; and he remits every wise Legislator to the Di-  
vine Oracles for Direction. He speaks indeed of the *Delphic* Oracle, either as  
knowing no better, or perhaps as not daring openly to contradict a vulgar Opinion:  
But the Foundation of his Argument manifestly shews his Opinion of the Necessi-  
ty of something more than human, to settle Matters upon a right Foot<sup>m</sup>; and  
the Reason which he gives, why no wise Law-giver should innovate any thing in  
Matters of Religious Worship, without a very evident Ground, is not only because  
the ancient Law of our Fore-fathers, is supposed to be originally founded upon  
some Divine Admonition, but also because *Human Nature* alone is not capable of  
knowing what is fit to be done in the Case. And <sup>n</sup> *Tully* gives much the same,  
as one of these Reasons, upon the like Occasion. And as to Matters of Morality,  
as well as of Religion, they owned, <sup>o</sup> that as the State of the World then was,  
there was no human Means of reforming it; and only a divine Institution could  
do the Business, as *Plato* frequently intimates; <sup>p</sup> *no Man having sufficient Ability*  
*to teach Men as they ought to be taught, unless God himself were his Guide and*  
*Director*<sup>q</sup>; and upon that account *an Application to the Deity could not, without*  
*great Impiety, be neglected*. The Truth is, the Philosophers found themselves so  
greatly perplexed with one another's <sup>r</sup> contradictory Reasonings, as in most other  
Things, so, particularly in the great Motives both to Religion and Morality, the  
Rewards and Punishments of another Life; that those of them, who did really  
themselves believe them, yet had not Courage enough to assert their own Belief,  
in so constant or positive a Manner, as was necessary to convince others that they  
were in earnest, for want of some more demonstrative Assurance, which they might

<sup>k</sup> Ille vero Deos esse putat; nec quemquam vidi, qui magis ea, quæ timenda esse negaret, timeret; Mortem dico & Deos. *Ib.* cap. 31.

<sup>l</sup> Τῷ μὲν τοι Ἀπόλλωνι τῷ ὧν Δελφοῖς τὰ τε μέγιστα καὶ κάλλιστα, ὧν πρῶτα τῶ νομοθετημάτων. — Ἰερῶν τε ἰδρύσεις καὶ θυσίαι ὧν ἄλλαι θεῶν τε καὶ δαιμόνων καὶ ἡρώων θερραπείαι, τελευτησάντων τ' αὖ θῆκαι, καὶ ὅσα τοῖς ἐκείνῳ ὑπερηγνύσας ἴλεως αὐτῆς ἔχειν. τὰ γὰρ δὴ τοιαῦτα ἔτ' ἐπιστάμεθα ἡμεῖς, οἰκίζοντές τε πόλιν εἰδέναι ἄλλω πεισόμεθα, εἰάν νῦν ἔχωμεν, εἰδὲ χρυσόμεθα ἐξηγητῇ, ἄλλ' ἢ τῇ παλαιῇ. ἔτ' οὖν γὰρ δὴ παρ' ὧν θεὸς παρ' αὐτὰ πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ἐξηγητής. *Plato de Repub. lib. 4. pag. 427.*

<sup>m</sup> Τῶτων πάντων νομοθέτης, ὅστις νῦν κέλῃ καὶ τὸ βραχυτάτον, ἔπολε μὴ τολμήσει κανονισμῶν, ἐπὶ θεοσέβειαν, ἥτις μὴ σαφὲς ἔχει τι, τείναι πόλιν αὐτῶν. καὶ μὲν εἰδὲ ὧν ὁ πάτερ νόμος εἴρηκε παρ' αὐτῶν θυσιῶν ἀπκωλύσει, μηδὲν τὸ ὠδύσαν εἰδὲς, ὡς περ' εἰδὲν διωκτὸν εἰδέναι τῇ θνητῇ φύσει τὸ τοιούτων πείρα. *Plato. Epinomis, pag. 985. where see likewise a long Passage foregoing the Words here cited.*

<sup>n</sup> Jam ritus familiæ patrumque servari, id est, quoniam antiquitas proxime accedit ad Deos, à diis quasi traditam religionem tueri. *Cic. de Leg. lib. 2.*

<sup>o</sup> Εὐ γὰρ χρὴ εἰδέναι, ὅτι παρ' αὐτῶν τε καὶ γένει οἷον δεῖ ὧν τοιαύτη καλὰ γαστρίω πολιτείῶν, θεῶν μοῖραν αὐτὸ σῶσαι λέγων καὶ κακῶς ἐρεῖς. *De Republ. lib. 6. pag. 494.*

<sup>p</sup> Ἀλλ' ὅδ' αὖν διδάξειεν, εἰ μὴ θεὸς ὑψηλοῖτο. *Epinomis. pag. 989.*

<sup>q</sup> Ἀμελῆσαι ἢ εἰ θεμτόν ἐστι θεῶν. *Ib. pag. 992.*

<sup>r</sup> Τὸ μὲν ἀληθές, ὃ ξέει, διαχυρίζεσθαι ταῦτα ἔτις ἔχειν πολλῶν ἀμφισβητήτων θεῶν. *Plato de Leg. lib. 1. pag. 641.*  
Nec tamen, quasi Pythius Apollo, certa ut sint & fixa quæ dixero; sed ut homunculus unus è multis probabilia con-  
jectura sequens. *Cic. Tusc. Quest. lib. 1. cap. 9.*



Leng. apply to all Capacities. What <sup>1</sup> *Simmi*, in *Plato's Phædon*, delivers as his own  
 S E R M. Sense of this Matter, may well be taken as the real Opinion of the most serious  
 XII. of them. *This*, says he, O *Socrates*, is my Opinion, as it may probably be yours,  
 in Matters of this Nature, (speaking about the future State of the Soul) that to  
 know the certain Truth in this Life, is either impossible, or at least exceeding dif-  
 ficult. But not to examine strictly what is said about them, or to give over before  
 we have considered the Matter so far on every side, as to find it insuperable, is the  
 Part of a mean and lazy Mind. For in this Case, we must resolve upon one of  
 these Courses, either to learn of others how the Matter stands, or to find it out our-  
 selves; or, if both these be impossible, we must take the best human Reason we can  
 find, and that which is least liable to Exception; and upon this Plank, or Raft,  
 must sail through Life as well as we can, unless any one can meet with a safe and  
 less hazardous Passage, upon a firmer Bottom, i.e. some Divine Revelation. This  
 is a remarkable Passage, and shews the Sense which they had of their Want of  
 something more than human Reasonings, to make their Condition safe and secure.  
 But, that which is yet more considerable to this Purpose is, that some of them  
 not only saw and acknowledged their great Want of a Divine Revelation, to set  
 them right in their Conduct both towards God and Man, but likewise expressed  
 a strong Hope or Expectation, that God would one Time or other, make such a  
 Discovery, as should dispel that Cloud of Darkness, in which they were involved.  
 This appears from a very remarkable Dialogue in *Plato*, (concerning Prayer) be-  
 tween *Socrates* and his young Pupil *Alcibiades*: Wherein the Philosopher shews  
 his Sense of the exceeding great Corruption of all the Heathen Worship, and on  
 how unreasonable Thoughts of the Deity most of it was founded; and how cau-  
 tious therefore Wise Men ought to be, in their Addresses to him, lest they should  
 offend against the Purity and Perfection of his Nature, by petitioning for Things  
 not only improper, but dangerous and hurtful to themselves in the Issue. And he  
 concludes, that *Men ought to wait patiently, till they are taught more perfectly  
 how to behave themselves, both towards God and Man.* And when *Alcibiades* en-  
 quires, when that Time would come, and who should be this great Instructor;  
*Socrates* replies: "He it is who has the greatest Concern imaginable for you, and  
 " who will remove the present Cloud from your Mind, and then apply something  
 " that may enable you to discern the true Difference between Good and Evil, as  
 " *Minerva*, in *Homer*, is represented dispelling the Mist from the Eyes of *Dio-*  
 " *medes*, that he might distinguish between a Divine and Human Person." That  
*Socrates* did not mean himself by this Divine Instructor, as some are willing to  
 surmise, is evident from his generally disclaiming any such sufficient Knowledge,  
 as being himself in much Uncertainty, and always remitting Men, in Cases of  
 Difficulty, to the Oracle. Neither did *Alcibiades* understand him so, as appears  
 from hence, "that as he offers a Garland to *Socrates*, in Token of Gratitude for  
 his good Advice, so he promises all other due Offerings to the Gods, when he  
 should see that happy Day which *Socrates* had given him some Ground to hope  
 for, and which he hoped would not be far off, since it depended upon their

Ἐμοὶ γὰρ δοκεῖ, ὦ Σώκρατες, περὶ τῶν τοιούτων ἴσως ὥστε καὶ σοὶ· τὸ μὲν σαφὲς εἶδέναι ἐν τῇ νυνὶ βίῳ, ἢ ἀδυνάτῳ ἢ παρ-  
 χάλεπόν τι· τὸ μέντοι αὐτὰ λεγόμενα περὶ αὐτῶν, μὴ ἔχει παντὶ τρέπον ἐλέγχειν, καὶ παραφύλασσε πρὸς αὐτὸν πανταχῇ (κα-  
 πῶν ἀπείρη τις, πάνυ μαλθακὴ ἢ) ἀνδρὸς· δεῖν γὰρ περὶ αὐτῶν ἐν γέ τι τέτων ἀπαρροῦσα, ἢ μαθεῖν ὅπῃ ἔχει, ἢ οὐρεῖν,  
 ἢ, εἰ ταῦτα ἀδυνάτῳ, τὴν γὰρ βέλτιστον τὴν ἀνθρωπίνων λόγων λαβόντα, ἐν δυσὲς ἐλεγκτέα, ἐπὶ τέτοις ὁχλήμασι, ὥστε ἐπὶ οὐ-  
 δίας κινδυνεύοντα ἀπαρροῦσαι τὸ βίον· εἰ μὴ τις δυνάμει ἀσφαλτέστερον, καὶ ἀκινδυνότερον, ἐπὶ βεβαιότερον ὁχήματι, ἢ  
 ΛΟΓΟΥ ΘΕΙΟΥ ΤΙΝΟΣ, ἀπαρροῦσθαι. Plat. Phædon. pag. 85.

Ἀναγκαῖον ἔν ἐστι παρμένειν ἕως αὐτὴς μάθῃ, ὡς δεῖ πρὸς Θεὸν καὶ πρὸς ἀνθρώπους ἀπαρροῦσαι. ΑΛΚ. Πότε ἂν παρέρται ὁ  
 χρόνος ἔτι, ὦ Σώκρατες, καὶ τίς ὁ παιδάριον; ἤδη γὰρ ἂν μοι δοκῇ εἶδέν τετον τὸν ἀνθρώπον, τίς ἐστιν. ΣΩΚ. Οὐδὲν  
 ἐστὶν ὃ μέλει περὶ σὺ· ἀλλὰ δοκεῖ μοι ὥστε τὸ Διομήδης φησὶ τὴν Ἀθηνᾶν Ὀμηροῦ λέγειν τὸν ὀφθαλμὸν ἀφελῆν ἢ ἀχλὺν.

Ὁφρ' εὖ γινώσκω ἡμῶν Θεὸν ἠδὲ καὶ ἄνθρωπον,

Ὅτι καὶ σὺ δεῖν λέγεις τὴν ψυχῆς πρῶτον ἀφελόντα τὸν ἀχλὺν, ἢ νυνὶ παρέρται τυχεῖν, τὸ τῆς αὐτῆς ἡδὴ παραφύλασσε δι' αὐ-  
 τὴν μάλιστα γινώσκοντα ἡμῶν κακὸν ἠδὲ καὶ ἐὼ λόγον. νυνὶ μὲν γὰρ ἐκ αὐτῶν μοι δοκεῖ διωκθῆναι. ΑΛΚ. Ἀφαιρέτω ἔτι βάλει τὸν ἀχλὺν  
 εἴτε ἄλλο τι, ὡς ἐγὼ παρεσκεύασμαι μηδὲν ἐν φόβῳ τῆς ὁφείτης παραφύλασσε, ὅς τις ποτ' ἐστὶν ὁ ἀνθρώπος· εἴ γε μέλ-  
 λουμι βελτίων γενέσθαι. ΣΩΚ. Ἀλλὰ μὴ καί κ' ἐστὶν θάυμαστον ὅσον περὶ σε παραφύλασσε ἔχει. ΑΛΚ. Ἐνί τίτι τοίνυν καὶ τὴν  
 δυσίαν ἀναβάλλει πρῶτον ἢ μοι δοκεῖ. ΣΩΚ. Καὶ ὁρῶς γε σοὶ δοκεῖ· ἀσφαλτέστερον γὰρ ἐστὶν ἢ ἀκινδυνώτερον τοῦτον  
 κινδυνόν. Platonis Alcibiad. ii. pag. 150, 151.

Ἐὰν τοῖς Θεοῖς ἢ καὶ γεφάνῃς ἐπὶ τὰ πάντα τὰ νομιζόμενα τίτε δώσω, ὅταν ἀκρίβως τὴν ἡμέραν ἐλθῶσιν ἰδῶ· ἤξει δ' ὁ  
 ἀπὸ μακρῶν, τέτων θελήτων. Ibid.

Favour



Favour and Good Will. *Socrates* indeed, in his *Apology*, as *Plato* has represented it, owns himself to have been an Instrument raised up by Providence, to awaken the *Athenians* out of that Lethargy of Wickedness and Disorder, into which they were fallen; <sup>w</sup> *but that possibly they would take his Admonitions so ill, (as Men in a Slumber hate to be awaked) that they would, at the Instigation of his Accuser, take away his Life: And then they might sleep on securely ever after; unless God himself should send some other express Messenger to take care of them.* However, let the lowest Meaning possible be put upon these, and the like Expressions; thus much may certainly be concluded from them, That the best Men thought, the sending of a Divine Revelation, to reform both the Religion and Morality of the World, was neither unnecessary, nor, considering the Goodness of God, unreasonable to be expected. To these Considerations we may also add, Lastly,

6. THAT such Men as now think that no Revelation was ever necessary, but that the Want of it might always have been sufficiently supplied, by the Use of human Reason alone, do not state the Matter fairly; because they unwarily confound part of that Light which we insensibly receive by the Revelation of the Gospel, with that Light of Nature which Men had before it: That is, they do not distinguish between those Notions which the mere Heathen World were in possession of before, and those which they attained to after the Preaching of the Gospel. And yet whoever carefully considers it, will find that Christianity made a very considerable Alteration, both in the Notion and Practices, even of those who continued obstinate Opposers of its Establishment. Just as the great Light which accompanied the Reformation of the Christian Religion itself, in these later Ages, helped to correct some of the Doctrines and Practices, even of that corrupt Part of Christendom, which refused to embrace the Principles of the Reformation itself; and whose Doctrines and Practices, for Want of that Light, which was even against their Inclination forced upon them, would otherwise, instead of being corrected, have been continually growing worse and worse: so some Part of the Light of Christianity broke in upon the neighbouring Heathen World, whether they would or no. And though their Manner of Writing was not so polite, as that of some of the more ancient Philosophers, yet their Thoughts and Reasonings were much improved. And I make no Question, but *Plotinus*, and others of that Time, put a more sublime Meaning upon some of the Doctrines of *Plato*, and other Ancients, than they themselves ever thought of. And so likewise they invented new Hypotheses, to account for ancient Practices. Thus, for Instance, though they did not wholly discard Polytheism and Idolatry, yet they refined upon it very much, to make it as plausible as they could, and came much nearer towards the Acknowledgment of the Unity of the Supreme Being, and the Attributes of his Divine Nature, than their ancient Predecessors had done. And when they saw the Christians, with such Assurance asserting, and with such Constancy dying, for the Belief of a Future State of Rewards and Punishments, they themselves spoke of it with more Certainty, and laid much greater Strefs upon it, than had been done formerly; making it a necessary Foundation for the constant Perseverance in Virtue; which others, for want of a sufficient Assurance of this Matter, were forced to recommend from more abstracted Motives, and such as were both less intelligible to a common Capacity, and less effectual: And therefore *Hierocles* tells us, <sup>x</sup> *that those who imagine the Soul of Man to be mortal, are more in Jest than in Earnest, when they pretend to talk of not abandoning Virtue upon any Terms. For if there be nothing in us which survives after Death, and which naturally would be adorned with Truth and Virtue, which is what we affirm of the Rational Soul; then we could have no pure Affection, or Desire of Good.* And it is very remark-

<sup>w</sup> Ὑμεῖς δ' ἴσως τὰχ' ἂν ἀχθόμενοι, ὥσπερ οἱ νυστάζοντες ἐγχειρόμενοι, κρείσσαντες ἂν με πειθόμενοι αὐτόν, ῥαδίως ἂν δόπ-  
κλίσγητε, εἴτα τ' λοιπὸν χρόνον καθύδοντες ἀφελαιοῖτε αὐν, εἰ μὴ τινα ἄλλον ὑμῖν ὁ Θεὸς ἐπιπέμψῃ, κηδόμενος ὑμῶν. —  
*Platonis Apolog. Soc. pag. 31.*

<sup>x</sup> Ὅθεν καὶ οἱ θνητὸν οἰοῦντο τὴν ψυχὴν, περὶ τὴν μὴ περιεσθῆναι τὸ δρετλὸν, κομψόθεν μάλλον ἢ ἀληθεύουσι· εἰ γὰρ μὴ εἴη τι  
ὑπομείνον ἢ μὴ θάνατον, ἔτι τοῦ φύσιν ἔχον ἀληθείας καὶ δρετῆ κοσμεύας, οἷον δὴ φάρμακον ἢ τὸ λογικὴν ψυχὴν, οὕτως ἂν ἐφείσε  
ἡμῖν καθαροὶ γένεσθαι καλῶν. *Hierocl. in Carm. Aurea.*

able



*Leng.* able, that even *Celsus* himself, an *Epicurean*, in his Books against the *Christian*  
 SER M. *Religion*, is forced to own his Approbation of the Doctrine of the Immortality of  
 XII. the Soul, and of future Rewards and Punishments; which it is certain none of  
 the more ancient *Epicureans* would ever have done. And as for our modern  
 Deists, who have any tolerable Notion, either of Natural Religion or true Mora-  
 lity, they are more beholding for it to that Light of Revelation, in the midst of  
 which they live, and which has greatly cleared up, and firmly established, the  
 Principles of Reason, though they will not own it, than to any of those human  
 Discoveries, which Philosophers, utterly destitute of such Revelation, or living  
 before it, could certainly lead them to. So that when Men argue against the  
 Necessity or Usefulness of Revelation, from the present Improvement of Reason;  
 they argue against Fact and Experience. And if they were not both very un-  
 grateful, in disowning and despising that Light, whereof they enjoy so great Be-  
 nefit without considering it; and extremely vain, in thinking so much better of  
 their own natural Abilities, than they do of those of all the greatest Men in the Times  
 preceding the Light of the Gospel; they could not but think it more likely, that  
 such wise and serious Men as *Socrates*, *Heraclitus*, *Plato*, *Cicero*, and others,  
 should understand the State of the World in their own Time, and know how  
 much could be done, in that State, towards finding true Religion, and bringing  
 Men to the Practice of it, upon the Foot of mere human Reason, much better  
 than we can do at this Distance; when we cannot be so sensible of the Want of  
 Revelation experimentally, because we are prevented by the antecedent Enjoyment  
 of it. Men who are bred and brought up in *Christian* Countries, where the great  
 Principles, both of Natural and Revealed Religion, are commonly professed, and  
 discoursed of, without Distinction; and our whole Duty, with all the proper rational  
 Motives to it, are made Parts of ordinary Instruction; even though they have ne-  
 ver strictly considered the additional Evidence which Revelation gives, yet will be  
 able to see, how agreeable to Natural Reason and Conscience many Things in this  
 Light now appear to be, which they could never have so clearly discovered, if  
 they had not been so effectually, though to themselves insensibly, assisted: Just as  
 a Man bred up in a Maritime Province, where he daily sees Ships, and converses  
 with sea-faring Persons, though he never made Navigation his Profession, will  
 certainly have a readier Apprehension of what belongs to it, and frame to him-  
 self more consistent Notions of it, than another Man of equal Understanding, who  
 has always lived upon the Continent, far remote from any such Conversation. It  
 is not always easy, to discern how much of that Stock of Knowledge, which any  
 Man has, was acquired purely by his own industrious Application of his Thoughts,  
 and how much by the external Teaching of others; but yet it is always evident,  
 that without the latter, he could not have made so great a Progress as not to need  
 any more Teaching for the future. So though there be now no occasion for any  
 new Revelation, to make the Principles of Natural Religion better understood;  
 since we can, by the Help of that Light, which we have already had from Hea-  
 ven, make such use of our natural Reason, as to see our original Obligation in  
 point of Religion and Morality; yet, without that Light, Men were fallen into  
 such a Maze of Uncertainty, that it is evident the wisest of them could not, of  
 themselves, find the Way out of it. And why should any Man now think, that if  
 he had been in the same State, he should have had better Success?

AND therefore upon the whole, from such Considerations, as I have mentioned,  
 and which I might have drawn out to a greater Length, we may justly conclude,  
 that as in the Nature of Things there can be no Impossibility of God's making a  
 particular Revelation of his Will to Men, nor considering our natural Notions of  
 the Goodness of God, any Reason to think it incredible, that he should at some  
 Time or other make such Revelation: So considering the general Condition of

Υ Τάτο μὲν γε ὁρθῶς νομίζουσι, ὡς οἱ μὲν ἐν βιώσαντες διδάσκοντες, οἱ δὲ ἄδικοι πάντων αἰώνιους κακοὺς συνίσχουσιν, καὶ τὰς  
 δὲ τὰ δόγματα μὴ εἶναι, μὴτ' ἄλλ' ἀνθρώπων μηδεὶς ποτε λήσῃ. — Vide Origen. contra Cels. lib. 8. pag. 409.  
 And to the same purpose, Μήτε τῶτοις εἴη μὴτ' ἐμοί, μὴτ' ἄλλ' ἑνὶ ἀνθρώπων διπλάσι τὸ πλεονεξία τῶν ἀδικῶν,  
 καὶ γεῶν ἀξιοθῆσθαι τὰς δικαίας δόγμα. Lib. 1. pag. 120.



Mankind without it, such Revelation is by no means to be looked upon as useful and unnecessary.

Leng.  
SERM.  
XII.

I SHALL now proceed more briefly to consider the Third Thing which I proposed in the beginning of my first Discourse on this Text; *viz.*

III. THAT it is every Rational Man's Duty to use all the proper Means he can to find out what is True Revelation, and what is only pretended.

AND this I think will not need any long Deduction of Arguments to prove it; because it seems to be a very natural Consequence from the two former Propositions, of which I have hitherto been speaking more at large. For if it be agreed, That every Rational Man, who believes a God and a Providence governing the World, is under a natural Obligation to enquire, whether God has made any particular Revelation of his Will to Men, which they are any way concerned to take notice of; which was the first of those Propositions: And if whoever seriously makes this Enquiry will find it reasonable to conclude, that some Revelation might be justly expected from the Goodness of God, considering the general State of Mankind without it; which was the Second: Then it is certainly very reasonable, that every Man, who is thus persuaded, should apply himself very seriously to find out, what Revelation is true, and what not; that he may neither be imposed upon, by admitting equally all Pretences to Revelation, nor cut himself off from all Benefit that may arise from that which is true, by rejecting all equally. It is evident to all Men, who will give themselves any Time to consider, that there is, and has long been in the World, a great Variety of Pretences to Revelation, and different Schemes of Religion have been formed upon them; and that these cannot possibly all be true, because they not only differ from, but manifestly contradict, one another in many Cases. And it is on the other hand very plain also, that if there never had been any true Revelation at all, there could not ever have been any Ground for Men's universally making such Pretences to it: unless we could suppose, that God had laid our Nature at first under an invincible Necessity of being perpetually deceived; which is inconsistent with our original and most natural Notions of his Goodness. And therefore to come at the Truth it is necessary, either strictly to examine all the particular Pleas of the several Pretenders to it, and compare them with one another, which would be a Work too great for any one Man to go through with, in his whole Life; or else we must fix upon some generally acknowledged Principle, which, being once established, will always be a ready *Criterion* to distinguish the true from the false, and which we may at any time apply as Occasion offers.

Now if it can be made appear, that there is any one continued and standing Revelation, the Parts of which have successively given Light to one another, though delivered at different Times and upon different Occasions; and which has in it all the internal Marks and Characters of Truth and Goodness, and all the external Evidence of Fact, to support its Pretensions of being from God, which any reasonable Man can desire: If it appeals to the common Sense and Reason of Mankind, and never fears an open and publick Examination of the Grounds upon which it stands, nor could ever be reasonably accused of Imposture, by those who saw the Facts which were intended to give Testimony to it, and yet were so far from being Parties to the Design, that they were greatly prejudiced against it: I say, If there be any such Revelation as this, it must be the True one, as coming from God; and all other pretended Revelations, set up in opposition to it, or assuming some seeming Imitation of it, in order to gain themselves Credit for a while, are to be disregarded; as being either false or impertinent. And wherever this Revelation is, which has all these external and internal Evidences of Truth, which no Imposture can have, there we may truly say, is, *the Mountain of the Lord, and the House of the God of Jacob*. And to this every Man ought to apply himself, because there he may expect *to be taught the Ways of God*.



*Leng.* AND that there really is in the World such a Revelation, to which we may apply ourselves for the Knowledge of all such Truth as is necessary, in order to conduct our Lives according to the Will of God, so that we may be assured of attaining the truest Happiness of which our Rational Nature is capable; and that this Revelation is proved to be from God, by as good Evidence as either the Nature of the Thing will admit, or any reasonable and unprejudiced Man can desire, is what I shall endeavour to shew in my following Discourses; wherein I shall consider not only the Nature of Miracles, which give Attestation to any Revelation, but the Nature of the Revelation itself, which Miracles are wrought to establish.

ALL that I shall now add, is only this reasonable Request; that Men would honestly apply themselves to the Examination, both of the Nature of the Doctrine revealed, and the Evidence for it, with such an unprejudiced Mind, as becomes the sincere Love of Truth: And that they would shew as much Care and Diligence in it, as a Matter of so great Importance justly requires. And *may the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, give unto us all, the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation in the Knowledge of him.*



## S E R M O N XIII.

Preached *May* the 5th, 1718.

St. JOHN iii. 2.

— *Rabbi, we know that thou art a Teacher come from God: For no Man can do these Miracles, that thou doest, except God be with him.*

**T**H E S E Words are the Confession of *Nicodemus* to our blessed Saviour, *Leng.* testifying his Conviction, from the Miracles which he wrought, that he was *S E R M.* a Person sent from God to be a Teacher of Men. Who this *Nicodemus* *XIII.* was, it is not necessary to enquire farther than the Scripture has told us; which informs us, that he was a *Pharisee*, that is, one of the most exact Sect among the *Jews*, in the Knowledge of Scripture and of the Traditions of the Elders; and that he was a Ruler of the *Jews*, that is, one of the *Sanhedrin* or Great Council at *Jerusalem*; and so was not only a Teacher, but a Man of some Dignity and Authority, *A Master of Israel*, as our Saviour's Expression is. And that which makes his coming to our Saviour, with this free Acknowledgement, the more observable, is, that the Persons of his Station were of all others the most averse to the Entertainment of *Christ's* Doctrine, because of that Interest and Authority which they had acquired among the People, and which they were very unwilling to part withal; which yet was in great Danger of being lost, or greatly impaired, by the growing Credit of our Saviour's Preaching. Even *Nicodemus* himself, though convinced in his own Mind, that our Saviour was a Messenger sent from God, yet durst not venture to be openly seen making this Confession to him: Though he was in some degree a *Disciple*, yet it was *secretly, for fear of the Jews*. However, he went farther than the rest of his Order would do, in this Confession; though probably more besides himself were inwardly convinced of the Truth of what he confessed: For he speaks in the Plural Number, *Rabbi, we know that thou art a Teacher come from God*: meaning thereby, either that others of his Rank, as well as himself, were inwardly of the same Sentiments, though they would not own it; or however, that the Miracles which *Jesus* did were so plain and undeniable, that every unprejudiced Man must needs, as he thought, be of the same Opinion which he here professes himself to have. And if the Reason for making this Conclusion were then so strong and pressing, when our Saviour was but newly entered upon his Office, and had not yet done so many wonderful Works as he afterwards did, and especially while the great Miracle of his Resurrection from the Dead, was yet wanting; how much more strong and conclusive must it needs be, when these are added to it, and confirmed by the following Miracles, which his Apostles wrought in his Name and by his Authority? But the Argument here used in the Text, whereby *Nicodemus* persuaded himself, that our Saviour was a Teacher come from God, is a general one, founded upon this, that *No Man could do such Miracles unless God were with him*; and therefore I shall not confine myself only to the Miracles of our Saviour, much less to those



*Leng.* those only which he wrought before this Discourse with *Nicodemus*; but shall  
 SERM. speak more generally of Miracles, as they are supposed to be an Argument for the  
 XIII. Truth of that Revelation, which they are wrought to confirm, and as all true  
 Revelation has ever been confirmed by them. And to make this Matter as clear  
 as I can, I shall take the following Method.

I. I SHALL endeavour to shew, What we are to understand by a Miracle.

II. THAT the Possibility of Miracles is not contrary to Reason: and consequently that where-ever they have been wrought, their Credibility is capable of a rational Proof.

III. How we may distinguish such Miracles as are from God, and wrought in Confirmation of Divine Truth, from such as are wrought, or pretended to be wrought, in Confirmation of Error or False Doctrine.

IV. WHEREIN that Assurance consists, which Miracles, thus distinguished, give us, that the Person employed in working them has a Divine Commission, or is a *Teacher sent from God*.

V. WHAT Evidence we now have from the Miracles anciently wrought, that the Christian Doctrine, contained in Scripture, is truly a Divine Revelation, and to be always embraced as such.

I. I SHALL endeavour to shew, What we are to understand by a Miracle.

Now if we were in general to take only the bare Etymology of the Word, it means no more than something which is very strange and wonderful, or surprizing to our Senses, something which Men admire at as very unusual, and seldom or never known to have happened before. And in this Sense all the rare and extraordinary Occurrences in Nature may be, as they sometimes are, called Miracles. But this does not come up to the full Import of the Word as it is used in Scripture and other Authors, to signify something extraordinary done for some particular End and Design. There are in the New Testament divers Words, in the Original, which in different Places are translated *Miracles*<sup>a</sup>, which may perhaps have some small Difference of Signification, if we were to make a minute Distinction between them. But being often used promiscuously for one another, there is no occasion to be particular about them; but to speak to the Thing itself intended by the general Word *Miracle*; which may be thus described: A strange and wonderful Effect, obvious to the Senses of the Beholders, yet produced by supernatural Means, or by the Interposition of some Power, superior to all human or ordinary Powers that we know of, invisibly assisting the Person at whose Instance the Effect is produced, and by Consequence giving Attestation to him. So that to make any Thing not only a true, but a significant Miracle, there are these three Conditions required.

1. THAT the Effect produced be something which is plain and obvious to the Senses of the Beholders.

2. THAT it be Supernatural, or exceed all Natural Human Power known to us.

3. THAT it be done for some evident End and Design.

I. THAT the Effect produced be something which is plain and obvious to the Senses of the Beholders. For otherwise it can be no Miracle to us, unless it be evident to our Senses as well as strange and wonderful. Thus all the Miracles recorded in Scripture, are Things that did really and evidently appear to all Beholders: The Facts were such as appealed to the Testimony of Men's Senses, for the Certainty and Reality of them, being plain beyond all Dispute to all that were

<sup>a</sup> θαυμάσια, τέρατα, δυνάμεις, but the most usual Word is σημεῖα.



present; or else there could never have been any Controversy, either about the Power producing them, or the End for which they were wrought. So that where only the Imaginations of weak People are wrought up to such a Degree of Amusement, by some artificial Tricks, that their Senses are for a Time deluded, so as not to mind what passes, but to fancy they see any Thing that is told them, there is no Miracle. And so likewise whatever hidden Effect is really produced in any Thing, by what Means soever it be done, yet it cannot be a Miracle, to any purpose, 'till it become the Object of Sense. The next Condition required in a Miracle, is,

2. THAT the Effect be Supernatural, or exceed all Natural Human Power known to us, either in respect of the Matter, or the Manner of it. *i. e.* When the Effect produced is not only unusual, but either such as no human or visible Power can produce in any manner, as raising the Dead to Life again; or such as in the Manner and Circumstances exceeds the Limits of all Human Power, as the Curing Diseases by a Word speaking. For though it be not a Miracle to cure a Disease, by the Application of proper Medicines, and the Assistance of Time; yet to do it in an Instant with a Word speaking, either without any Application at all, or by applying something contrary to all human Probability, as Clay to the Eyes of a Blind Man, is miraculous: And so it is to speak divers Languages without ever having learned them. 'Tis not the Thing itself effected, but the Manner and Circumstances of effecting it, which is miraculous, and requires a Supernatural Power. But by *Supernatural*, I do not mean such a Power, as exceeds the natural Power of every created Being whatever, so that it should necessarily be the immediate and infinite Power of God; but only, that in respect of Human Power it be Supernatural, or exceed all the known Powers of the visible Agent: For I suppose that Angels, both good and bad, are able to do Things far exceeding all Human Power, by virtue of that natural Power which God has originally given them; and so, being to us invisible, may do, or assist Men to do, Things which to us are truly miraculous. And thus several Things recorded in Scripture as miraculous, are said to be done by Angels: As the destroying 185000 Men in the *Assyrian* Camp in one Night; the Earthquake, and the Rolling away the Stone from our Saviour's Sepulchre; the Opening the Prison Doors for Saint *Peter*, and Striking off his Chains; and many other Things of like Nature.

NAY farther, some Things which are said to be done by God himself, are in other Places also said to be done by Angels, as being done at his Command by their Ministry; as the Rescuing of *Lot*, and Destroying of *Sodom*. So that except we knew the full Extent of all the natural Powers of all such invisible Beings as are superior to us, we cannot, in every Instance (nor is it necessary that we should) exactly distinguish such Effects as are wrought by the immediate Power of God, from such as are wrought by Angels at his Command, or by his Permission; unless it be where the Things themselves are particularly ascribed to his immediate Power alone, or are of such a Nature, as manifestly to require a Power equal to that of Creating Something out of Nothing.

AND as this is the Case of Good Angels, so, I think, there is no Reason to doubt, but that Evil Angels also, or wicked Spirits, may, by God's Permission, work some Miracles, without exceeding their own natural Power; that is, may do, or assist in doing, Things, which Human Power alone cannot effect. This seems to be plainly supposed in divers Places of Holy Scripture: Thus *Moses* allows, that there might arise a Prophet or Dreamer of Dreams among the People, who might give a Sign or a Wonder, and that Sign or Wonder might come to pass, which was intended for seducing them to other Gods; and he says, that God, by suffering this, would prove whether they *did love the Lord their God with all their Heart*. And our Blessed Saviour plainly foretels, that there should arise false Christs, and false Prophets, which should shew great Signs and Wonders, in so much, that if it were possible, they should deceive the very Elect: And we find that the Magicians of *Egypt*, by their Enchantments, did some of the very same Miracles which *Moses* and *Aaron* did, though they were not able



*Leng.* to go on to do the rest. There are some, indeed, that suppose these Miracles  
 S E R M. of the Magicians were not really wrought, or that there was no Change made in  
 XIV. the Object, as the Beholders supposed, but that Men's Senses were only deluded;  
 for which there does not seem to be any Ground from the Text. Nor does such a  
 Supposal solve any Part of the Difficulty, or make the Matter less miraculous: For  
 it does not require a less Power to alter all the Organs of Sensation in a whole  
 Multitude of By-standers, than it does to alter the Things that are the Objects of  
 Sense, in a Matter which is properly to be determined by our Senses. And if no  
 farther Miracles had been wrought by *Moses* and *Aaron*, but the same which the  
 Magicians did, or persuaded the Beholders, upon the Credit of their Senses, that  
 they did; then the Beholders would have had no Means of distinguishing, by the  
 Miracles, which of them acted by the Superior Power; but must have had re-  
 course to some other kind of Evidence, to prove which of them was from God.  
 For they could no more know whether *Moses* did not delude their Senses, than  
 they could whether the Magicians did. And besides, there is this very great In-  
 convenience, in supposing all such Miracles to have been Delusions of Sense, that  
 it will be a great Weakening of all Arguments from Matter of Fact, which relies  
 upon the Evidence of Sense. For if the same Appearances, to all Intents and Pur-  
 poses, can be caused when a Thing is not done, as when it is really done, How  
 can I ever know whether it is done or no?

2 Theff.  
 ii. 9.

AND thus they, who think there can be no true Miracles to us, but what are  
 wrought by the immediate Power of God, will find it as difficult to prove when  
 Miracles are really wrought, as it can be, supposing them wrought, to prove what  
 are from God, and what are from wicked Spirits. Indeed there is no question,  
 but that a great deal of Cheat and Imposture has passed upon ignorant and super-  
 stitious People for Miracle: And the Scripture tells us of *Lying Wonders*, which  
 the *Man of Sin* should work, *whose Coming is after the Working of Satan, with*  
*all Power, and Signs, and Lying Wonders.* But this hinders not, but that some  
 of the Works of *Satan* may be really such Signs and Wonders as are truly above  
 any Human Power to effect. And those may be truly called *Lying Wonders*, which  
 are extraordinary and wonderful Things really done in order to establish a Lie, or  
 false Doctrine. And the Apostle seems to intimate as much, in telling us for what  
 Reason God does justly permit those to be deceived, who are not real and sin-  
 cere Lovers of Truth: who perish, *because they received not the Love of the Truth,*  
*that they might be saved: And for this Cause God shall send them strong Delusion,*  
*that they may believe a Lie.* Now if it be consistent with the Goodness of God,  
 to suffer such as do not sincerely love the Truth, to be deceived by *Lying Won-*  
*ders* of one Kind, Why not also of another? No doubt the Devil, who was  
 a Liar from the Beginning, is as willing to exert his natural Power, as far as  
 God permits, for the deceiving of Mankind, as wicked Men are. And the  
 Consequence of Men's being deceived will be the same in one Case, as in the  
 other. But,

3. ANOTHER Condition requisite to make an Effect miraculous in the strict  
 Sense, is, that it be done for some evident End and Design. Every unusual E-  
 vent, how surprizing soever it may be in itself, and how unknown soever the  
 Cause of it may be, is not any Miracle to us, unless it have some plain Design,  
 for which it is done, annexed to it. One very common Name for Miracles is  
*σημεία* or *Signs*; but nothing can be truly a *Sign*, which is not plainly intended  
 to give Evidence to something besides itself, such as the attesting to the Truth of  
 some particular Doctrine, or giving Credit and Authority to some particular Per-  
 son, at whose Instance such unusual Effect is produced. A Miracle then, from  
 its End or Use, is to be considered, as *an Effect produced in a Manner contrary*  
*to the usual Method of Providence, by some invisible intelligent Being, superior to*  
*Man, in order to give Testimony to the Truth of something which would otherwise*  
*appear, at least, doubtful or uncertain.* The next Thing therefore which I would  
 observe, is,



II. THAT the Possibility of Miracles, such as we have now been describing them, is not a Thing contrary to Reason; and consequently that where-ever they have been wrought, their Credibility is capable of a Rational Proof.

Leng.  
SERM.  
XIV.

THOSE who call themselves *Deists*, and yet discard all Revelation as a Fiction or human Invention, generally fall into this Persuasion, that there can be no such Thing as a Miracle. Because they see the Frame and Order of the visible World disposed in an uniform Manner, and its Motions preserved in a constant and regular Course; so that there is a constant Succession of Effects orderly following their Causes, as it were by a stated Law or Rule; from thence they imagine, the Course of Nature to be something so fixed, as never, upon any Occasion, to admit of any Change: As if the material World were something entirely independent upon the Will of God, and had Original Powers of its own, which no Intelligent Being could either limit or controul. From an indistinct and ambiguous Use of the Word *Nature*, (as I have formerly observed<sup>d</sup>) Men are apt to confound Causes and Effects; and from hence they ascribe, an Active Principle to the Things themselves, which are merely passive, and are acted upon. This leads them to think, that what they call the Course of Nature cannot be altered, but by some Power superior to that Power by which it is preserved. This, in the End, will terminate in a Supposition, that the World preserves itself, or that there is no Necessity of the Divine Direction or Concourse, and by Consequence, no Necessity that it should at first be made by an Intelligent Being. Whereas, if Men would carefully distinguish between that which really acts, and that which is only acted upon, they might soon be convinced, that as the material World, or any Part of it, has no Will or Power of its own, nor can ever of itself begin Motion or Action; so whatever is moved or acted, must originally and ultimately be moved or acted by some Intelligent and free Being; and that therefore, all Things which are done in the World, and all the Effects which are produced, either ordinary or extraordinary, are either done immediately by God himself, or by some inferior Intelligent Beings; Matter having no Powers of its own, nor being capable of any Law or Rule of Acting, but what an Intelligent and Free Being imposes upon it; no Part of it ever acting, without first being acted upon. So that, properly speaking, the Course of Nature in general is nothing else but that continual uniform Manner in which the Supreme Intelligent Being produces certain Effects, according to his own Will. And this Manner of Acting, in every particular Instant, depending upon his Will, may, if he sees fit, be as easily altered at any Instant as continued. So that what we call a Miracle, requires no more Power in the real Agent, than what we call the Course of Nature. And the same may be said, as to Inferior or Created Intelligent Beings, as far as the Compass of their natural Power, which God has bestowed upon them, reaches: And how far it does reach, we cannot certainly know. Men may, if they please, call the Working a Miracle a Violation of, or Contradiction to, the Laws of Nature; but then they should consider what they mean by Laws of Nature, and not make a Free and Intelligent Being necessarily subject to those Laws of Motion, by which it chuses ordinarily to produce such and such common Effects upon Matter, which we therefore call Natural, because they are usual and constant; not that they are antecedently necessary, in respect of the first Agent, whether it be the Supreme, or any other Free and Intelligent Being, which has a real and true Power of Acting, and not barely a Capacity of being acted upon. And from this Way of Reasoning it follows, that Miracles are not impossible, if we believe the Power of a Free and Intelligent Being, always actually concerned in the constant Preservation of what we call the Course of Nature: And consequently, the Credibility of Miracles is capable of a rational Proof. Where-ever they are wrought, they are Matters of Fact, and may be proved, by proper Evidence, as other Facts are: And though I cannot give a mechanical Account of the Manner how they are done, because they are done by the unusual Interpo-

<sup>d</sup> See SERM. VIII.



*Leng.* fition of an invifible Agent, fuperior, both in Power and Wifdom, to myfelf; I  
 S E R M. muft not therefore deny the Faét which my own Senfes testify to be done. The  
 XIV. Truth is, we can no more folve the ordinary *Phænomena* of Nature, without ha-  
 ving recourfe at laft to an Intelligent Being, than we can thefe extraordinary ones  
 which we call Miracles. In one Cafe indeed we know more of the Circumftances  
 which go before and follow, becaufe we fee the Things oftner, and are more famili-  
 arly acquainted with them, than we are in the other Cafe; but ftill the firft Mover  
 is the fame in both: And as he testifies the constant Interpoftion of his Provi-  
 dence aétting, either mediately or immediately, in the one Cafe; fo does he likewise  
 testify an extraordinary Interpoftion, upon rare and extraordinary Occafions, in  
 the other. No Man will fay, that it requires a greater Power to drown the Earth,  
 or to divide or dry up the Sea, than it did at firft to make them, and ftill to pre-  
 ferve them as they are at prefent: And therefore, if I believe the one, though I  
 can give no Account of the Manner how it was done, Why fhould I be fo much  
 concerned to find out the Manner in which the other muft be done, or elfe to  
 think it impoffible? A Miracle is fupposed to be a Thing which rarely happens,  
 and only upon fpecial Occafions, and therefore is not to be expected in every Age:  
 But is it therefore incredible, that ever there fhould have been any fuch Things  
 done, becaufe they are not now done? Or have I any Reason to difbelieve Mira-  
 cles well attested, and not repugnant either to the Goodnefs or Juftice of God,  
 but, on the contrary, highly conducing to the more manifeft Declaration of both,  
 only becaufe they were done feveral Ages ago; any more than I have to difbelieve  
 the more ordinary Occurrences of Providence, which paffed before my own Time,  
 becaufe the fame Occurrences in a continued Train may perhaps never happen  
 while I live? I would by no means encourage an unreafonable Credulity in any  
 Cafe, and much lefs in a Cafe of fo much Moment; but if, to avoid this, Men  
 are refolved to believe, that all the Relations of Faéts eftimated miraculous, are  
 falfe, how well attested foever they be; they ought never to charge others with  
 being too credulous: becaufe they themfelves then believe one general Conclufion,  
 as unreafonable as the moft abfurd Relation of any Miracle, can poffibly be. The  
 true Way to avoid Credulity, in either Cafe, is to confider proper Evidence, and  
 to be determined by that. But it is equally unreafonable, to believe every Thing  
 falfe, as to believe every Thing true, which depends upon the Testimony of  
 others.

SUPPOSING therefore, that Miracles, which are extraordinary Effects produced  
 by fome Intelligent Power, fuperior to Man, in order to give Evidence to fome-  
 thing befide themfelves, do not in their Nature imply any Thing impoffible to  
 be done, and by Confequence are capable of being proved when they are done;  
 we are next to confider,

III. How we may diftinguifh fuch Miracles as are from God, and wrought in  
 Confirmation of fome Divine Truth, from fuch as are wrought, or pretended to  
 be wrought, in Confirmation of Error or falfe Doctrine.

THIS is neceffary to be confidered, becaufe we have already allowed that a Power  
 lefs than Omnipotent may work real Miracles. And if we allow that there are  
 Beings both good and bad, who are naturally, in Power, far fuperior to Mankind;  
 unlefs we fuppose them perpetually reftained by God Almighty from ever pro-  
 ducing any Effect, which can become fenfible to us, though it be never fo much  
 within the Compafs of their natural Power and Will to effect it; then we muft  
 endeavour to find out fome Way to diftinguifh fuch unfual Effects, as are occa-  
 fionally produced by the Affiftance of God or Good Angels, from fuch as are  
 wrought by the Devil and his Agents; fince, without fome Means of Difinction,  
 we cannot make any good ufe of either.

Now the Difference, between thefe two Sorts of Miracles, does not always de-  
 pend upon one fingle Point; but upon the confidering and comparing of feveral  
 Circumftances taken together; which fhould make us the more careful that we be  
 not rafhly furprized into a Miftake, upon one fudden or fingle Appearance, before  
 we have viewed the reft.



MARKS of Distinction proper to the forming a true Judgment about the Matter will arise, partly from the Things which are done; that is, the Miracles themselves; and partly from the End for which they are done, or from the Nature of that Thing which is intended to be proved by them. And when both these are such as are worthy of God, according to the best natural Notions which we can have of his Attributes and Perfections, then we may justly conclude, that they are from God, or from such Powers as act by his Commission and Direction. Leng. SERM. XIII.

1. As to the Miracles themselves, those which are Divine, will have some apparent Circumstances of Advantage, to distinguish them from such as are either delusive or diabolical, if they are sincerely and carefully attended to. Upon Comparison, a considerate Enquirer may discover of what Kind they are, either by their Greatness, or Number, or long Continuance, or visible Tendency to the Good and Benefit of Men.

1. THEIR Greatness often discovers whence they proceed: It was this which distinguished the Miracles wrought by *Moses* and *Aaron*, from those which were wrought by the Magicians of *Egypt*. It is said, that They turned their Rods into Serpents as *Aaron* did; but *Aaron's* Rod had this Advantage, that it devoured their Rods. It is also said, that upon turning the Waters into Blood, *the Magicians did so with their Enchantments*. And again, that as *Moses* brought up Frogs, so the Magicians likewise brought up Frogs upon the Land of *Egypt*: But the destroying those Frogs at the appointed Time, is attributed to *Moses* only. And then, as to the turning the Dust of the Earth into Lice, this the Magicians could not do, but owned that it was the Finger of God. Whether this exceeded absolutely the natural Power of Wicked Spirits, any more than the producing of Frogs; or whether that Power was here restrained which they were before permitted to exercise, as it is hard for us to know, so it is not necessary to be determined: for however it was, the Magicians were forced to confess, that the Power by which *Moses* wrought his Miracles, was superior to that by which they wrought their's. In like manner we find, that *Simon Magus*, who had so far deluded the People of *Samaria* with his Sorceries, (that is, either with real Miracles, done by the Assistance of Wicked Spirits, or at least such strange Effects as they could not distinguish from real, which to them was all one) that they concluded him to be the great Power of God, upon the Appearance of the Apostles was presently put out of Countenance, by the Exercise of a Power which he could not pretend to, though he would gladly have purchased it. So *Elymas*, another Sorcerer, was struck blind by Saint *Paul*. And it is acknowledged by the Heathens themselves, that the Miracles wrought by their Demons or false Gods ceased, and their Oracles were put to Silence, about the Time that Christianity begun to be preached. *Julian*<sup>c</sup> himself owns the Fact, though he would fain give another Solution of it. Again;

2. THE Number of Miracles, and especially when they are of different Kinds, is another Mark of Distinction; when not one or two of an obscure or suspicious Nature, but many, and unquestionable Facts, such as give great Numbers of People, of all Capacities and all Parties, Opportunity of seeing, and making strict Enquiry into them.

THUS the Miracles of *Moses*, were not only one or two Things which the Magicians could not come up to, but many, of several distinct Kinds, and very remarkable, such as the whole Nation were Witnesses to. And those of our Saviour were neither few nor private, but of many Kinds, and wrought before vast Multitudes, both of Friends and Enemies. The Facts were undeniable, however they disputed about the Nature of that invisible Power by which they were produced.

3. WHEN Miracles are of long Continuance, either as to the Works themselves, being often repeated upon proper Occasions, or as to the durable Effects of them; when they make such a remarkable Change in the Course of Things, as must be observed by every one, and long remembered in the World; then they shew the

<sup>c</sup> Vid. *Cyrl. contra Julian.* p. 198. Edit. Spanhem.



*Leng.* Power of God. Of this Nature were the Miracles which God shewed by *Moses*,  
 SERM. in *Egypt*, in the *Red Sea*, and in the *Wilderness*; and such were the Miracles of  
 XIII. *Christ* and his Apostles. They were not presently over, so as to make Impression  
 upon Men only for a little time, and then, as it were, to vanish; but they lasted  
 many Years; and there are visible Marks of the wonderful Effects of them re-  
 maining in the World to this Day. Both *Jews* and *Christians* are a standing Mo-  
 nument of them, and of the Truth of those wonderful Prophecies which accom-  
 panied them.

THESE Marks which I have hitherto mentioned, are chiefly Marks of Power: And where-ever Miracles are opposed to one another, as in the Case of *Moses* and the *Magicians* for Instance, that which prevails, and puts to Silence the other, must needs proceed from the Superior Power. This is both a reasonable and obvious Way of judging in case of Competition. But Power is not all: For,

4. AND lastly: The Goodness of Miracles, or their visible Tendency to the general Good and Benefit of Mankind, is a great Sign of their being from God, or good Spirits employed under him. The Nature of the Fact will have some Resemblance of its Author. Those Wonders which the Devil and his Agents work, will be either wicked and mischievous, or at least freakish and fantastical, such as serve to no good Purpose, but only to amuse or affright the Beholders, or to entangle them in some farther Evil. Such were generally the Miracles pretended to be wrought by the Dæmons or false Gods of the Heathen, either full of Cheat and Imposture, so as not daring to abide the Light of a fair Trial; or when they had any thing real in them, it was mixed with something either absurd and ridiculous, or else cruel and ill-natured, or impure and vile, such as none but a lying, wicked, and unclean Spirit could assist in. But Divine Miracles are of another Kind: As they proceed originally from the Author of all Good, so they are likewise, in their Nature and Tendency, good and beneficial to Men; Instances of particular Kindness and Compassion, either to their Souls or Bodies; and are never wrought but for great and weighty Reasons. If we consider those that are mentioned in Holy Scripture, we shall find that they always tended to some great and excellent Purpose, such as the Comfort and Support of good Men, and Deliverance from great and pressing Danger. Sometimes indeed there appears a great Mixture of Severity in some of them, but then such Severity was exercised upon very wicked People, who were past being reclaimed to their Duty, and was designed for a standing Monument of God's Indignation against grievous Offenders; as the Plagues of *Egypt* were indeed severe Miracles upon a cruel and tyrannical Nation; but even these were at the same time great Instances of Mercy, to an oppressed and suffering People, who were thereby delivered from a long and cruel Bondage; as well as Evidences of that Divine Revelation which was now to be made to them. And all our Saviour's Miracles were Instances of the greatest Charity to Men; Effects of Power directed by Goodness, and marked with the plainest Characters of Divine Wisdom and Compassion.

HITHERTO I have mentioned those Marks which help to distinguish the Miracles themselves. But then,

2. THE End for which Miracles are wrought, *i. e.* the Doctrine intended to be proved or confirmed by them, is likewise to be considered, in order to judge truly from whence they proceed. For if it be such as is plainly unworthy of God, or contradictory to his Perfections or moral Attributes; or if it evidently overthrow what he has already established by many plain and unquestionable Miracles, then another Miracle cannot be sufficient to prove it. For Miracles can only be a Testimony of the Truth of something possible to be true. Neither is the Trial of Miracles by this Touchstone at all unreasonable (for it is not proving in a Circle, as I shall have Occasion to shew hereafter, when I come to consider the Nature of that Assurance, or Evidence which Miracles give.) *Moses* gives this plain Direction, where the Miracles are supposed to be real, which are wrought by a false

Deut. xiii. Prophet, or at least not otherwise to be distinguished: *If there arise among you*  
 1. *a Prophet, or a Dreamer of Dreams, and giveth thee a Sign or a Wonder, and the*



the Sign or the Wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go *Leng.*  
after other Gods, to serve them, thou shalt not hearken unto the Words of that *SERM.*  
Prophet: For the Lord your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the Lord *XIII.*  
your God with all your Heart, and with all your Soul. And he gives this Reason,  
why such a Prophet should be treated as a wicked Impostor, because he hath spoken  
to turn you away from the Lord your God, who brought you out of the Land of  
Egypt. No Miracles are sufficient to establish the Worship of a false God, which  
would be contrary both to our natural Notions of the true God, and in the Isra-  
elites contrary to those many and great Miracles which he had wrought in deliver-  
ing them out of the Land of Egypt. God might therefore suffer false Prophets to  
work Miracles, to try the Sincerity of his People, having before-hand given them  
this Caution, and having likewise laid down a plain and sure Rule, to distinguish  
what Prophets were from him, if they would but carefully and honestly attend  
to it.

THERE is indeed another good Rule laid down for distinguishing between the  
true or real, and false or pretended Prophets, which is by the Event, or judging  
of their Pretences by the Issue: *If thou shalt say in thine Heart, How shall we* *Deut.*  
*know the Word which the Lord hath not spoken? When a Prophet speaketh in the* *xviii. 22.*  
*Name of the Lord, if the Thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the Thing*  
*which the Lord hath not spoken.* But this Case does not belong to our present Con-  
sideration: For though Real and True Prophecy be indeed a Miracle, yet a pre-  
tending to Prophecy is not so; for it is no more than what any confident Im-  
postor may assume, whose Pretences are easily confuted, when the Event proves  
contrary. But where there is no Event to judge by, we must have some other  
Evidence of the Truth and Sincerity of any pretended Prophet, before we are obli-  
ged to give Credit to him; and then the foregoing Rule is to take place. And  
the same will now hold under the Christian Dispensation: For the Doctrine of  
Christ being a Revelation every way worthy of God, and being established and  
confirmed by such Miracles as, both for Number and Kind, for Evidence and  
Greatness, are beyond all reasonable Contradiction, is now itself a Touchstone for  
trying all future Doctrines. And whatever Spirit shall contradict this, is not of  
God: as Saint John says, *By this we know the Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of*  
*Error.* And therefore Saint Paul plainly declares, that if either *himself or an* *Gal. i. 8.*  
*Angel from Heaven should preach any contrary Doctrine, he ought not to be be-*  
*lieved; because no Doctrine could receive so great Confirmation, in any Kind,*  
*as the Gospel had already received.*



## S E R M O N XIV.

Preached *September* the 1<sup>st</sup>, 1718.

St. JOHN iii. 2.

— *Rabbi, we know that thou art a Teacher come from God: For no Man can do these Miracles, that thou doest, except God be with him.*

Leng.  
SERM.  
XIV.

I N my former Discourse upon these Words I propos'd to consider these several Particulars:

I. To shew, What we are to understand by a Miracle.

II. THAT the Possibility of Miracles is not contrary to Reason: and consequently that, where-ever they have been wrought, their Credibility is capable of a rational Proof.

III. How we may distinguish such Miracles as are from God, and wrought in Confirmation of Divine Truth, from such as are wrought, or pretended to be wrought, in Confirmation of Error and False Doctrine.

IV. WHEREIN that Assurance consists, which Miracles, thus distinguished, give us, that the Person employed in working them has a Divine Commission, or is a *Teacher sent from God.*

V. WHAT Evidence we now have from the Miracles anciently wrought, that the Christian Doctrine, contained in Scripture, is truly a Divine Revelation, and to be always embraced as such.

THE three first of these Particulars I have already spoken to, in a former Discourse, and shall now, without repeating what was then said, proceed to the Fourth, which is,

IV. To shew, wherein that Assurance consists, which Miracles, so distinguished, as before described, can give us, that the Person employed in working them has a Divine Commission, or is a *Teacher sent from God.* For upon this Assurance, whatever it is, the Force of *Nicodemus's* Reasoning here in the Text is grounded: And upon this must be grounded all the Testimony that Miracles can give to any Doctrine.

Now allowing that such Miracles, as are wrought by any Person, proceed from a Divine Power, the Question is, How far they secure us of the Veracity of that Person who appears to be the Instrument in working them? or, What Connection there is between the Truth of the Miracle, and the Truth of his Doctrine? And the Answer to this in short is, That our Assurance in this Case depends upon our natural Notions of the Truth and Goodness of God, which we believe to be as essential



essential and necessary Attributes of an infinitely perfect Being, as Power and Wis- Leng.  
dom. He cannot deceive any more than he can be deceived: And therefore, as S E R M.  
we cannot conceive it to be a Thing becoming, or worthy of the Divine Majesty, XIV.  
to work a Miracle for no End or Purpose at all, so much less can we conceive it  
to be consistent with the Perfection of his Nature, to work one on purpose to de-  
ceive an innocent and sincere Seeker of Truth. It cannot be thought consistent  
with infinite Goodness and Veracity to give such Countenance to an Impostor.  
This would be like sealing him a Commission to deceive in his Name, who is par-  
ticularly called, *A God of Truth*. Now that all Men naturally have this Notion  
of God, that he neither can be deceived himself, nor intend to deceive others in  
what he declares to them, is evident, not only from the Confession of the wisest  
Heathen Moralists, <sup>a</sup> who had nothing but natural Light to guide them, who con-  
stantly argue upon this Supposition, as an allowed Principle among such as had a  
true Sense of Natural Religion: But likewise because those who go about to dis-  
prove or unsettle any Part of Revealed or pretended Revealed Religion, assume the  
same Principle, when they attempt to destroy its Credit, by assigning something in  
it which they imagine not reconcileable to the Truth of Things. So that the  
Principle is allowed, both by those who assert and those who deny Revelation.  
And, which is yet more, unless Truth and Veracity be a Perfection so necessary  
to the Divine Nature, that we may entirely rely upon it in all Cases, we can  
have no Assurance even of the Truth and Certainty of our own Faculties; but  
may, for ought we know, be under a perpetual Delusion, in those Things where  
we think we have the clearest and most distinct Perception; and consequently can  
never be able to judge aright of Truth or Falshood in any Case. For if the Au-  
thor of our Being be not absolutely a God of Truth, the very Frame of our Un-  
derstanding may be such as to be always deceived.

BUT since our fundamental Notion of God is, That he is a Being of all possi-  
ble Perfection; and since Truth and Fidelity are allowed to be Moral Perfections  
necessary to an Intelligent Being; we cannot suppose him deficient in these, with-  
out derogating from the allowed Perfection of his Nature; much less can we  
ascribe the contrary to him; which yet we must necessarily do, when we imagine,  
that he really employs his Power to give Credit to a Falshood, or authorizes any  
Man to work a Miracle in his Name, to confirm any Declaration contrary to  
Truth; or that he suffers any Man to use such a Power, as cannot be distinguished  
from Divine, in Confirmation of an Error, or human Fiction, without giving  
some sufficient Means to an honest Mind to disprove him, if he attempts it. And  
therefore the Man in the Gospel, who had been born blind, and was miraculously  
cured by our blessed Saviour, went upon a natural Ground when he argued thus  
with the Jews: *Why, herein is a marvelous Thing, that ye know not from whence* Joh. ix.  
*he is, and yet he hath opened mine Eyes. Now we know that God heareth not Sin-* 30.  
*ners; but if any Man be a Worshipper of God and doth his Will, him he heareth,*  
*— and if this Man were not of God he could do nothing.* The Jews had just  
before declared, *that they knew*, or were fully persuaded, *that God spake unto*  
*Moses*; and therefore they professed themselves his Disciples. But now how did  
they know this, but by the Evidence of those Miracles which *Moses* wrought in  
the Name of God? At this therefore the Man justly wonders, that they should  
be so unreasonably partial, and should not upon the same Evidence believe, that  
*Jesus* was from God, as well as *Moses*. This is certainly a good Argument, in  
particular against those who professed so great a Reverence for *Moses*, and whose  
whole Revealed Religion was owned to be established upon the Truth of his Mi-  
racles, and who were taught by that Religion to expect, that the *Messias*, when  
he came, should work Miracles also; not only because that was the usual Way,  
by which God had given Attestation to his former Prophets among them; but be-  
cause the *Messias* in particular was to be a Prophet like unto *Moses*; and their

<sup>a</sup> Κομιδῇ ἄρα ὁ Θεὸς ἀπλὴν καὶ ἀληθεῖς, ἢ τε ἔργῳ ἢ ἐν λόγῳ; καὶ ὅτι αὐτὸς μεθίσταται, ὅτε ἄλλος ἐξαπατᾷ, ὅτε καὶ φαν-  
τασία, ὅτε καὶ λόγῳ; ὅτε καὶ σημείων πομπὰς, ὅθ' ὕπαρ' ἐδ' ὄναρ. Plato de Repub. lib. 2. pag. 382.



Leng. own former Prophets had foretold, that he should work many Miracles. This  
 SERM. made those that were most unprejudiced among them, when they saw the Mira-  
 XIV. cles which *Jesus* did, enquire whether this were not indeed the *Christ*, and say,  
 ~~~~~ *When Christ cometh, shall he do more Miracles than these which this Man hath*  
 Joh. vii. *done?* But though this Argument has a more immediate Force in it against the
 31. *Jews*, who lived under the Profession of a Belief of Miracles, yet it is not without
 a natural Foundation in Reason, even in respect of all that have any just Sense of
 the Perfection of Divine Providence.

I HAVE before^b shewn, that Miracles cannot be looked upon as Things impos-
 sible, unless it be by those who exclude an Intelligent and Free Providence from
 the constant Government of what we call the Course of Nature; which makes
 the *Epicurean* Poet, when he ridicules Miracles, as fit only to be believed by
Jews, assert it, as his settled Opinion, that there is no such Thing as *Divine Pro-*
vidence any way concerned in the Effects of Nature, whatever happens, ordinary
 or extraordinary. But as those, who own the World to be governed by the pow-
 erful Direction of a wise Providence, cannot reasonably deny the Possibility of
 Miracles, when there is a proper Occasion for them; so neither can they, who
 believe the moral Perfections of the Divine Nature, reasonably suppose Divine Mi-
 racles ever to be intended to give Countenance to any Deceit or Falshood; since
 this would as effectually destroy our natural Notions of the Truth and Goodness
 of God, as denying their Possibility would destroy those of his Power and
 Wisdom.

UPON these Considerations therefore, I think we may justly conclude, that
 whatever Revelation is attended with such Miracles, as I have before described Di-
 vine Miracles to be, must necessarily be a Divine Revelation; and that we cannot
 otherwise be deceived by it, but either by our own Negligence, in not sufficiently
 attending to the Terms in which it is delivered, and thereby mistaking its Mean-
 ing; or by wilfully perverting the Sense and Design of it through Partiality, Pre-
 judice, or some prevailing Passion, contrary to a sincere and unprejudiced Love of
 Truth. And I cannot readily think of any Objection, to which this Way of Rea-
 soning, from the Truth of God to the Truth of Revelation thus attested, is liable,
 but only this, That a Person, who has once wrought true Miracles in the Name
 of God, and thereby gained a just Credit to his Doctrine, may possibly afterwards
 revolt from the Truth, and by virtue of that Credit and Authority, which his for-
 mer Miracles gave him, may teach another Doctrine, for which he has no such
 Commission. And this is a Case which may be supposed possible, from what St.
 Gal. i. 8. *Paul* says, *Though we (i. e. himself or any other Apostle) or an Angel from Hea-*
ven, preach any other Gospel unto you, than that ye have received, let him be ac-
cursed. Now to clear the Objection which may be made from hence, concerning
 the Difficulty of discerning between true and pretended Revelations, there are these
 two Things to be considered.

I. THOUGH it be supposed, that a Person once truly commissioned by God to
 declare his Will, may possibly forsake or transgress the Terms of that Commission,
 and declare something afterwards, which is not the Will of God; yet it cannot be
 conceived agreeable to the Divine Goodness and Truth, that God should suffer
 his Credentials to continue with him after such a Defection: that is, it is no way
 probable, that he should be assisted with the same Power of Working Miracles,
 after his Revolting from the Truth, which was at first given him to confirm it.
 And to this purpose what our Saviour said to his Disciples, upon occasion of one
 that cast out Devils in his Name, whom they forbid to do it, because he did not
 follow them, is very considerable: *Forbid him not, (says he) for there is no Man*
 Mark ix. *which shall do a Miracle in my Name, that can lightly speak Evil of me.* While
 39. this Power is continued to him, he cannot readily be my Enemy. God can easily

^b See the foregoing Sermon.

^c Credat Judæus apella,
 Non ego: namque Deos didici securum agere ævum;
 Nec, si quid Miri faciat Natura, Deos id
 Tristes ex alto cœli demittere tecto.

HORAT. Sat. 5. lib. 1.

withdraw his Credentials from one that begins to make an ill Use of them; and *Leng.* he will leave no honest Mind under a Necessity of being deluded by him. But *SERM.* it is also to be considered, *XIV.*

2. THAT those Persons to whom any Doctrine is propounded, as a Revelation from God, are supposed both to have a Capacity, and to lie under a natural Obligation, to make an honest and diligent Use of their own Reason and Judgment, in distinguishing between greater and less Evidence, as well as in discerning when one Doctrine contradicts or differs from another. They are likewise supposed to have the Knowledge of the common Principles of Natural Religion to go upon, and to act according to those Principles, that they may not be deceived in admitting any pretended Revelation which contradicts them. And therefore suppose they were once convinced, by a plain and unquestionable Miracle, that a Message delivered to them by such a Person, was really a Message from God, this ought not to make them absolutely depend upon every other Message, which the same Person might possibly deliver afterwards, so far as to receive them all without examining, whether they agreed with that original Message, for which his Credentials were first given him. For this would be an unreasonable Credulity, which, if not guarded against, might lead to the Destruction of all rational Faith in Revelation; inasmuch as it would expose a Man to the Belief of Contradictions, as often as a Man, that had once a true Revelation, should think fit, upon the Credit of that, to pretend to another which was not true. And to this purpose there is a remarkable Instance, in the Old Testament, of a Prophet punished for too easy a Credulity in the pretended Revelation of another Prophet, without considering how far a former certain Revelation made to himself, which it contradicted, was to be attended to in Opposition to it. The Case was this: A Man of God was sent from *Judah*, with a Prophecy against the Altar at *Bethel*, the Truth of which he confirms by an immediate Sign or Miracle, both upon the Altar itself, and upon the King, who burnt Incense upon it, when he offered Violence to him. And the same Revelation, of which he had this Conviction, directed him from God, not to eat or drink in that Place, nor to return the same Way that he came, after he had delivered his Message: This Direction he observed for a Time, and in virtue of it refused the King's Invitation. But another old Prophet, falsely pretending the Message of an Angel, seduces him back, and persuades him to eat and drink: and while they sit at the Table together, has a real Message from God revealed to him, declaring, that the Prophet, who had thus suffered himself to be deceived into an Act of Disobedience, should be punished for this Offence, by not having his Carcass come into the Sepulcher of his Fathers. Which Prediction was soon verified upon him, by his being slain by a Lion, before he could return Home. Now the Observation which I would make from this Account, pertinent to our present Purpose, is this: That the Prophet, who had a divine Direction given to himself by a Revelation, of the Truth whereof he was perfectly assured, both by the internal Conviction of his own Mind, and by the outward Testimony of a Miracle added to it, ought not to have suffered himself to be countermanded, even by one that had the Reputation of a True Prophet, without as great, or greater Evidence, that God had discharged him from the first Command. The Subject of the Command indeed does not appear to be in its own Nature indispensable, and consequently it might have been superseded by the same Authority which gave it; but then, he ought to have had as plain and full Assurance of the Revocation, as he had at first of the Command, or else, to disobey was a manifest Transgression of a known Duty. Whether he had an Inclination to stay and be entertained at *Bethel*, which might make him desirous to have the Command relaxed, and therefore too ready to believe it so; or whether he had only too implicit a Confidence in the old Prophet, because of his Age and Authority, and therefore did not give himself Time enough to weigh the Evidence for and against his pretended Message, is not very material. Certain it is, that his Credulity was culpable, in being determined by a less Evidence against a greater, in a Matter of Divine Revelation.

Now

Leng. Now to apply this to the Case put by Saint *Paul*, of an Apostle, or an Angel
 S E R M. from Heaven, preaching another Gospel, or declaring other Terms of Salvation,
 XIV. than what were at first declared by the Gospel of *Christ*, which had been received
 upon the highest Evidence: We may justly reason, that they ought not to be
 regarded by any one, who knew and believed the Divine Authority of the first
 Publishers; because two contradictory Revelations cannot both be from God; and
 the first being admitted upon the greatest Evidence of Divine Authority that the
 Matter is capable of, whoever pretends afterwards, by that Authority, to offer
 another, contradicting what he has before delivered, may indeed weaken the Credit
 of the former, as far as his Testimony goes, but can never establish the Credit
 of the latter: Because I can never have greater Assurance of the Truth of any Revelation
 whatever, than I naturally have of this first Principle of all Reasoning,
 that *Contradictions cannot be true*, since if it were supposed possible that they
 could, then there could be no Difference between Truth and Falshood, but both
 might be the same.

UPON the whole therefore, the Evidence which we have from Miracles of the
 Truth of any Revelation, supposes the Truth of our own Faculties, and the first
 Principles of Reason: It supposes likewise a Belief of the Being of God, and the
 Perfection of Goodness and Truth in the Divine Nature. And whatever is con-
 tradictory to these cannot be capable of any Proof, because the Argument to prove
 by, and the Thing intended to be proved, destroy one another. And therefore,
 if the Evidence of Divine Miracles is ever alledged in Proof of any Doctrine, con-
 tradictory to the Divine Nature and Attributes, we may be sure that there is some
 Mistake in the Application, since one Truth can never really contradict another.
 And this makes it a very proper Undertaking sometimes, to shew the Reasonable-
 ness of the whole Christian Revelation; and that it is a Doctrine every way wor-
 thy of God, even at the same time that we prove its Divine Authority by un-
 questionable Miracles. For it may be observed, upon this Occasion, that as, in
 the Proof of any Relation whatever, the Nature of the Evidence, and the Nature
 of the Thing to be proved, are both to be taken into Consideration; so in the
 Case of a Revelation said to be from God, and the Evidence which is brought to
 prove it such, that is, Miracles, or Divine Testimony; both the Nature of the
 Revelation itself, and the Nature of the Miracles, are carefully to be attended to,
 before we can truly judge, whether the Proof, and the Thing to be proved answer
 one another.

AND this is not proving in a Circle, as some weakly imagine, but is the necessa-
 ry Way which is used in all Cases of Testimony whatever. A Thing must be
 granted to be capable of being proved; that is, it must be supposed possible, be-
 fore any Evidence whatever can be allowed to prove it.

To put the Case in a plain and familiar Instance: A Man, with whose Cha-
 racter we are altogether unacquainted, gives us, in Writing, a long and particular
 Relation of many Things in a Foreign Country, of which we have never had the
 like Account before; and lest we should doubt his Veracity, he brings ample Te-
 stimonials of divers Persons of great Credit, well known to us, to vouch that they
 have long known him to be a Person of great Integrity, and every way well qua-
 lified to give a just Account of all the Matters relating to the Country of which he
 treats. Now if, upon reading and considering his Relations, we find nothing in
 them contradictory to Reason, or inconsistent with itself, then we are induced,
 upon the Testimony of his Vouchers, to believe his Account. But if we doubt,
 or have an ill Opinion of the Integrity of those Persons, whom he brought to
 testify for his Veracity, or have Reason to suspect their Testimonials forged; then
 the Relation which he gives of Foreign Matters, how credible soever it may be
 in itself, (and though we think it true for other Reasons,) as it can receive no Cre-
 dit from such insufficient Testimony, so neither can it give any Credit to it; but
 it will stand just in the same State of Doubt and Suspicion that it did before. So
 that here is no proving of the Testimonials, and the Relation each by the other
 in a Circle. But yet if the Relation, for which this Evidence is alledged, be
 either

either manifestly contradictory to itself, - or to some plain and evident Principle of Truth; then it is beyond the Possibility of being proved by any Evidence whatever, and shews, that the Testimony brought to favour it, was either false or mistaken. This Instance is easily applied to the Matter before us, and shews, that the Truth of the Doctrine or Revelation is not brought to prove the Truth of the Miracles, because the same Doctrine would be true in itself, though no Miracles were wrought to confirm it to us: But Divine Miracles were wrought to assure us, that this true Doctrine was from God. And yet on the other Hand, a Doctrine evidently false cannot be proved true by any Miracles, but destroys the Credit and Divinity of such Miracles as are pretended to confirm it: since nothing can prove a Thing to be what it is not.

THE whole is no more than this: If the Miracles are Divine, the Doctrine to which they give Testimony is Divine also: and therefore prove the Antecedent, and the Consequence will follow. But on the contrary, if the Doctrine is supposed false, the Miracles, that offer to prove it, cannot be true: And therefore to prevent this Consequence, shew, that there is nothing to be objected to the Truth of the Doctrine. And this is no more arguing in a Circle, than what is contained in every *hypothetical* Syllogism.

AND thus from the Nature of Human Testimony, and the Evidence it gives to such Relations as are supported by it, we may see the Connection between Divine Testimony, or Miracles, and Divine Revelation; only there is this advantageous Difference on the Side of Divine Testimony, that it is a more certain Proof of what it is intended for, than any Human Testimony can be, because it is infallible, and proves the Truth of what it is rightly applied to, beyond all Possibility of Doubting. And if we are led into any Mistakes by it, the Ground of them must be either in our misunderstanding of the Doctrine, or misapplying the Evidence to something else than that for which it was first intended: For if a Doctrine be contradictory to the Divine Nature, as no Miracles can prove it true, so we may depend upon it, that no Divine Miracles were ever wrought with an Intent to prove it. Our natural Notions of the Truth of God will not allow us to have such an unworthy Thought of him. And herein consists that Assurance which Divine Miracles give us, that the Person employed in working them has a Divine Commission, or is intrusted with a Declaration of the Will of God. I now proceed in the next Place to shew,

V. WHAT Evidence we now have from the Miracles anciently wrought, that the Christian Doctrine, contained in Scripture, is truly a Divine Revelation, and to be always embraced as such.

THE former Consideration went no farther, than to shew in general, the sufficient Force of Divine Miracles, to convince a reasonable Man of the Truth of that Doctrine or Revelation, for which they are given in Evidence; and therefore immediately, and in the first Instance, can respect only those who lived at the Time when such Revelation was made, and such Evidence given in Confirmation of it, and both applied to their own Senses; so that they had the utmost Opportunity possible of enquiring into, and comparing every Circumstance. But as for us, who live at this Distance of Time, and never had the Happiness to hear those that had the Original Commission to declare this Doctrine, nor to see their Credentials, the Case is different. And therefore, supposing all the foregoing Argument granted, yet some will say, What is that to us? or, How are we affected by it? Now to this I answer, in short, that we are just so far affected by it, as we can have any Certainty of these two Things:

1. THAT such Miracles were really wrought. And,
2. THAT the Doctrine contained in Scripture is the same Doctrine which was then revealed, and for which they were wrought.

AND for both these we have as good Evidence as the Nature of the Things is capable of, which is as much as any reasonable Man can desire. Besides an inward

Leng. and supernatural Revelation from God to a Man's own Mind, of which none can
 SERM. be conscious but the Person himself to whom it is immediately made, there are
 XIV. but two possible Ways, whereby we can be assured of any Matter of Fact, as the
 ~~~~~ Thing now in Question is. The first is the Evidence of our own Senses, and the  
 second is a sufficient Testimony of credible Witnesses. The first of these Kinds  
 of Assurance no Man can have for the thousandth Part of those Things which yet  
 he most firmly believes and acts upon, without any Scruple, in all the Affairs of  
 Life; and it would be both unreasonable and endless to desire it. Those who lived  
 in the Time of our Saviour and his Apostles, could not all of them have this Kind  
 of Evidence, though great Numbers had it. Much the greater Part of the Men  
 of that Generation must necessarily depend upon the Testimony of others, which  
 is the second Way of Assurance. But now this being of divers Kinds, and ad-  
 mitting of different Degrees of Credibility, according to the Capacity, Integrity,  
 Means of Information, and the like different Advantages, which those have who  
 give Testimony; and their Manner of delivering it being also of two Kinds, by  
 Word of Mouth, or in Writing, we ought to consider, whether we have not, in  
 all these respects, the very best Kind of Testimony that we can desire. Living  
 Evidence, of those who were Eye and Ear Witnesses, can belong to none, but  
 those who lived in the same Age when the Things are supposed to be done, or  
 very near it: And therefore after Ages cannot have this Way. But then they  
 may have what is equivalent to it; that is, they may have all the Particulars con-  
 veyed down to them in Writing, which may be more authentick than any single  
 Oral Evidence, if we could have it, can be. A Record (in History, written at  
 the Time when the Things are done, by Persons of unquestionable Integrity, and  
 capable, in all Respects, of giving true Evidence, is the best Human Ground of  
 Assurance that any Fact at such a Distance is capable of. Now the Miracles of  
*Christ* and his Apostles, and an Account of the Revelation which they made,  
 have stood upon such a Record from the very Time: For the same Original Hi-  
 story which gives an Account of the Miracles, gives us also an Account of the  
 Doctrine, for the establishing of which those Miracles are said to be wrought, to-  
 gether with many particular Circumstances attending the Preaching of it. So that  
 whatever Evidence we have, that the Relation of Miracles recorded in Scripture is  
 true, we have the same Evidence, that the Doctrine of the Scriptures is the same  
 which was then delivered. And accordingly these are now inseparable Parts of the  
 same Record, and must stand or fall together. And unless we are resolved to dis-  
 believe every Thing for which we have not the immediate Evidence of our own  
 Senses, we have as good rational Ground of Assurance, of the Truth of this Re-  
 cord, as we can desire; that is, as much as any unprejudiced Man would require  
 in any other Case.

BUT if it be objected, that this being a Matter of the greatest Moment of all  
 others, we ought not to be content with the same Kind of Evidence, which may  
 reasonably satisfy us in other Cases of less Concern: To this I answer,

I. THAT the very making of this Objection is a Sign, that Men are not so sin-  
 cere Lovers of Truth, nor so impartial in the embracing of it as they ought to be.  
 For if when two Things equally evident are proposed, a Man should say, I will  
 believe the one, because I have no Concern in it; but I will not believe the other,  
 because, if I do, it must make a great Alteration in my Conduct, which I am re-  
 solved against: Would not this be looked upon as an unreasonable Prejudice?  
 The great Moment of the Thing is indeed a very good Reason, why we should  
 be more than ordinarily inquisitive about it, that we may get as perfect a Know-  
 ledge of it as we can, and be very diligent to examine into the Truth of it, and  
 consider well the Evidence upon which it is grounded; but it is no Argument  
 against believing it upon sufficient Evidence, or for peremptorily requiring more  
 than is necessary, though we may be glad when, upon Enquiry, we find it more  
 abundant than we expected. A Truth of small Consequence may sometimes, by  
 the very Nature of it, have a greater Number of Evidences to it, than another  
 which is of more Moment; and yet if the latter have sufficient to prove it, we  
 ought to be satisfied. But,



2. THE Providence of God had taken care to give sufficient Satisfaction even to this Prejudice also, and to remove the very Ground of the Scruple: And that by these two Ways: Leng.  
SERM.  
XIV.

*First*, By unquestionable Records of our Religion, and the first Evidence by which it was proved. And,

*Secondly*, By divers successive subsequent Evidences given to it, which do more particularly affect the following Ages.

*First*, THE Records of our Religion, both as to the Miracles and the Doctrine, have better Grounds of Credibility, and more evident Marks of Truth than any other ancient History whatever, if we consider either the Books themselves, in which the Things are designedly delivered; or the collateral Evidence to the Facts, occasionally delivered by those who were no Parties to them.

As to the Books themselves, which contain the Sum of what we believe of the Doctrine and Miracles of *Christ*; they were written by several Persons, in different Places, yet all of them well acquainted with every Circumstance of what they write; for they either heard and saw every Thing themselves which they relate, or were constant Companions of those that did, and had their Attestation to the Truth of their Testimony: And they could have no possible worldly Interest, which could induce them to assert what they did, if they had not been perfectly persuaded of the Truth of it; but on the contrary, they knowingly ventured their Lives for asserting it, and laid them down in Defence of it: And that moreover they had the Assistance of the Spirit of God, directing them in all necessary Truth, they proved by the Testimony of those Miracles, which God enabled them to work, both at and after the Time of giving their Testimony. But this is something farther than what I now insist upon. These Writings were soon dispersed into great Numbers of Hands, and translated very early into many Languages, kept in many Places, far distant from one another, with a religious Care, constantly read in Publick, that all might be acquainted with them, and so not easily capable of being falsified. And though the constant Use of those Writings made them be much oftner transcribed than any other Books, by which Means there must of Necessity, without a Miracle, be many literal or verbal Mistakes, or Variations in the Manner of Writing; yet this great Number of Copies, which may be compared together, and so rectified by one another, has been a great Security to all the essential Doctrine contained in them. And farther, that these Books were written at the Time pretended, and by the Persons to whom they are ascribed, we have a more universal and constant Testimony, in every several Age since they were writ, than can be produced for any other Writings so ancient; and this allowed without Contradiction by the first Enemies of Christianity, who undertook to write against it, who had better Means of Information than those that came after them, and would have been willing enough to have objected against their being genuine, if there had been any Colour for it. And now are not such Writings as these a more undoubted Account of the Doctrine and Miracles of *Jesus Christ* and his Apostles, than any that can be produced for the Life and Actions of any other the most eminent Persons that lived so long since? I think no Man offers to question, whether there were such a Person as *Alexander the Great*, who subdued the *Persian* Empire, and made other very great Conquests in the World; and yet there is not now extant any particular History of any considerable Part of his great Actions, which can pretend to have been written by any that knew him, or till several Ages after his Time. *Ptolemy* indeed, the first King of *Egypt* of that Name, and *Aristobulus*, two of his great Officers and Companions, both writ his History; but their Writings are long since lost: And if they were not, yet <sup>d</sup> *Arrian*, who perused them, tells us, that in many Things they did not agree together; and that therefore, where they differed, he was forced to use his own Discretion, and to chuse sometimes from one, and sometimes from the other, what

<sup>d</sup> See *Arrian*. in *Proemio*.



*Leng.* he thought most probable. And as for other Writers upon the same Subject, S E R M. though they were very numerous, yet there was a wonderful Disagreement among XIV. them; more and more inconsistent Accounts having never been given of any Man. And yet from such Memoirs as these, at the third or fourth Hand, and so on, the History of that great Prince is delivered down to us: And we may make no Scruple of believing the Substance of it, notwithstanding the considerable Differences among the first Writers in many particular Circumstances. And the like may be said for almost any ancient Human History. Now does not this give the Gospel History a very great Advantage, in Point of Credibility, above any other, if we only consider the Authors by whom it was delivered to us? But,

*Secondly,* We have also very considerable collateral Evidence to the Facts recorded in those Writings, occasionally given by those who were no Parties to them. There are many remarkable Passages, both in *Jewish* and *Heathen* Authors, *Greek* and *Roman*, which accidentally confirm the Truth of those Accounts which we have in the Gospel History, in Point of Time and of Persons, and of divers extraordinary particular Facts: But these having been frequently taken notice of, both by ancient and modern Apologists for Christianity, I shall not now repeat them. I shall only by the way observe one Thing, which seems to be very considerable in this Case; That as to the Miracles of our Blessed Saviour, the bitterest and most learned primitive Enemies to Christianity, such as *Celsus* and *Porphyry*, have given sufficient Testimony to them in Point of Fact, even by their very Way of Writing against them. For though they seem sometimes willing to treat them as *Fictions*, yet because they could not deny the Account of them to have been written by Eye and Ear Witnesses, they would not venture to abide by this Plea, but chose rather to ascribe them to Magick, and in Opposition to them, to magnify Stories of strange Feats done by *Pythagoras*, *Abaris*, *Aristeas*, *Proconnesius*, *Apolonius*, and other Impostors, many of which were forged long after their Times to serve this turn, as it may be justly suspected: and the rest had very little Colour of Truth from any competent History; and if they had been true, could serve to no good Purpose, being very trifling and ridiculous. Now if they could, with any Probability, have denied the Miracles of our Saviour and his Apostles, they would never have taken this Method of answering them. But of this I shall have Occasion to take farther notice, when I come to speak of those successive subsequent Evidences to the Truth of Christianity, which more particularly affect the Ages after its first Promulgation: which I intend, with God's Assistance, to consider the next Opportunity.



# S E R M O N XV.

Preached October the 6th, 1718.

HEB. ii. 3, 4.

*How shall we escape if we neglect so great Salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard them.*

*God also bearing them Witness, both with Signs and Wonders, and with divers Miracles and Gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own Will.*

I HAVE, in my two foregoing Discourses, considered the Nature, and Possibility of Miracles in general: How we are to distinguish what Miracles are truly Divine, and what are not; and likewise upon what Ground we may be assured that the Person working such Miracles, in the Name of God, has a Divine Commission, or is enabled to reveal the Will of God: And in the last Place, I considered, What Evidence we may now have, from the Miracles anciently wrought, that the Christian Doctrine, contained in Scripture, is truly a Divine Revelation, and to be always embraced as such. And whereas this depends upon our Certainty of these two Things:

*First, THAT such Miracles were really wrought: And,*

*Secondly, THAT the Doctrine, contained in Scripture, is the same which was then revealed.*

I observed, that both these are contained in the same Original Records of the Christian Religion, and are inseparable from each other. And for the Truth of what these Records contain, we have not only as good Evidence in an Human Way as can be shewn for any other Historical Relation of the like Antiquity: But there are two Considerations which carry the Matter yet farther; and which may be sufficient, both to answer the great Moment of the Case, and even to satisfy the Scruples, or Prejudices, of such as are not obstinately resolved against it.

ONE is, *That the Records of our Religion, both as to the Miracles and Doctrine, in respect of the Books and their Authors, have some particular Grounds of Credibility, or evident Marks of Truth, above any other History of the like Antiquity: Of which I spoke briefly in my last Discourse.*

THE other is, *That there are divers successive subsequent Evidences to the Truth of Christianity, which more particularly affect the Ages after its first Promulgation, and which are a kind of Standing Divine Attestation to the Truth of it, and do, in a great measure, supply to us the Want of that immediate sensible Evidence of Miracles, which was peculiar to those who heard the first Preaching of it. And*



*Leng.* I have chosen to speak to this Consideration, from these Words of the Apostle,  
 SERM. *God also bearing them Witness, both with Signs and Wonders, and with divers Mi-*  
 XV. *racles and Gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own Will;* because in these  
 Words he sets forth that general Attestation, which God was pleased to give to the  
 Doctrine of *Christ*, as it was delivered by those whom he appointed to be his Wit-  
 nesses, expressed by several Words, which may be understood to signify all the  
 several Kinds of extraordinary or Divine Evidence, upon which the Truth of the  
 Gospel was first established; not only such Signs or Wonders as were immediately  
 wrought to gain Attention to it, and to shew that its Publishers had a Commission  
 from Heaven; but such miraculous Powers, or Gifts of the Spirit of God, as were  
 of a more permanent Nature; and such Marks of Divinity as appeared in the very  
 Doctrine itself, when the several Parts of it came to be examined: Which I  
 shall therefore now take Occasion more particularly to consider, under these two  
 Heads:

I. SUCH extraordinary and wonderful Effects, as either attended, or were conse-  
 quent upon, the first Preaching of the Gospel.

II. THE successive Accomplishment of Prophecies delivered by *Christ* and his  
 Apostles.

WHICH two Things are standing Instances both of Divine Power and Wisdom  
 manifested in the Christian Doctrine.

I. SUCH extraordinary and wonderful Effects, as either attended, or were con-  
 sequent upon, the first Preaching of the Gospel: Which were not of a transient  
 Nature, but of so long a Continuance, as might give all its Opposers Time and  
 Opportunity thoroughly to consider, and examine into the Ground and Reason of  
 them. Of this Kind we may reckon, The strange and surprizing Manner, in  
 which the Gospel was at first propagated into all Parts, so much above all human  
 Probability: and, The marvellous Effects which it had upon those who attended  
 to it, where-ever it was propagated.

I. THE surprizing Manner of its Propagation, into all Parts, so far above all  
 human Probability, considering the Instruments employed in it, is a plain Instance  
 of a Divine Power attending it. That Persons of such a mean Condition as the  
 Apostles were, unlearned and unexperienced in worldly Policy, should set about  
 so great a Work as that of persuading all the World into the Belief of a Matter of  
 Fact, such as the Resurrection of our Saviour was, for declaring of which at first  
 they run the greatest Hazards imaginable, is a plain Evidence, that they them-  
 selves were fully convinced of the Truth of it, and of the Importance of declaring  
 it, as also of the mighty Consequences to be drawn from it.

THAT they should hope for Success in this Enterprize, and therefore should go  
 about it with the greatest Resolution and Courage, notwithstanding both their  
 own Weakness, and the mighty Opposition they were sure to meet withal, could  
 be owing to nothing but a full and entire Persuasion of Divine Assistance, and an  
 inward Consciousness, that they were *endued with Power from on high*.

BUT that they should, so wonderfully, and above all human Expectation, suc-  
 ceed in this Design, and should persuade Men, in such Numbers, of all Ranks,  
 not only to believe, but also to engage themselves to maintain the Belief of a  
 Thing so much against all their present Ease and Interest, was what nothing less  
 than the mighty Power of God could effect.

IF *this Device had been of Men it must* of Necessity have come to nought, as  
 Gamaliel wisely argued; since it wanted all those Advantages which can give an  
 Imposture any Probability of succeeding. For whoever designs to put a Cheat upon  
 the World, and draw Disciples after him to maintain it, with any Hopes of Suc-  
 cess, must either have some Power and Authority to awe Men, or great Cunning  
 and Policy to contrive Matters so as to deceive them; or some specious Pretence  
 of worldly Interest, to draw them in; or else his Doctrine must be suited to the  
 corrupt



corrupt Inclinations of Men, in order to allure them. Without some, or all of *Leng.* these, humanly speaking, no Innovation of long settled Custom is likely to prevail. But now the Apostles had none of all these Advantages to recommend themselves or their Doctrine. They had neither Force nor Craft to engage Men; nor *SERM.* could they propose to their Followers any earthly Advantage, but the quite contrary: Neither did their Doctrine gratify them with the Allowance of any unreasonable sensual Satisfaction, but commanded them to mortify every unruly Desire of that Kind; and threatened them with eternal Misery, if they indulged themselves in any unlawful Lust or Pleasure. And yet under all these Circumstances, unprovided as they were, they designed to root out the settled Religion of the World, and to destroy the Worship of false Gods, which had for a long Time prevailed, and been confirmed both by Law and Custom; and instead of such inveterate Superstition to plant the Doctrine of a crucified Saviour, and to persuade Men to believe in him, without the Assistance of any human Art or Eloquence, only by a plain Relation of his Life, and Death, and Resurrection; a Thing seemingly incredible to the prejudicate Opinions of those who valued themselves for Wisdom. Now how could they hope to compass so mighty a Design, if they had not known assuredly, that *God* would *work with them*, and *confirm their Word*? How could they, who but a little before out of Fear forsook and denied their Master, on a sudden become so full of Courage, after his Departure from them, as to declare those who crucified him to be Murderers; and him to be raised again, and to be the Prince of Life, by whom we are to attain Life Eternal; and whose Witnesses they professed themselves to be, and ready to endure the greatest Torments for his sake? Though they were *ignorant and unlearned Men*, they could not but know, that a little before their Time *Judas of Galilee* and *Theudas*, who had attempted Innovations, and drawn Disciples after them, had soon perished in their Designs, and their Followers been brought to nought. They knew also the Hatred and Opposition of all the leading Part of the *Jews* against their Master, when he was alive; and could not but foresee what a Storm it would raise, to declare them guilty of his innocent Blood. And moreover, if what they taught had been only a *cunningly devised Fable* of their own Contrivance, they had Reason to suspect that some of themselves, under such severe Trials, might fall off and discover it, and then their Design must have been utterly ruined: And yet none of all these very obvious Considerations could discourage them, from prosecuting an Undertaking, which they certainly knew must be attended with *Bonds and Imprisonment*, and all other Dangers, even Death itself. *None of those Things moved them*, nor did they value their Lives, so they might fulfil their Ministry. Now their Success was answerable to their Courage and Integrity; for notwithstanding all possible human Opposition was made to them, yet they went on and prevailed every Day, converting great Numbers where-ever they came; and in a few Years they went into the most considerable Parts of the habitable World, and left behind them living and growing Evidence, that they had been there, either in Person or by faithful Deputies, by the Number of Converts which they had made both among *Jews* and *Gentiles*. And yet they did not arrogate any of this Success to their own Power, but only to the Grace of God which was with them, and to the Evidence of those Miracles which he enabled them to work in the Name of *Christ*: For *their Preaching was not with enticing Words of Man's* *1 Cor. ii.* *Wisdom, but in Demonstration of Spirit and of Power, that the Faith*, of those *4* who believed, *might not stand in the Wisdom of Men, but in the Power of God*; against which no human Power or Contrivance can be able to stand. Saint Paul frequently mentions this Evidence of the Power of God going along with them, in Opposition to all the Power and Wisdom of the World; and says, with a sort of Triumph, *Where is now the Wise? Where is the Scribe? Where is the Disputer of this World? Hath not God made foolish the Wisdom of this World? For God hath chosen the foolish Things of this World to confound the Wise, and the weak Things of the World to confound the Things which are mighty.* He hath made use of Instruments, seemingly base and despised, that the mighty Effects of their Doctrine



*Leng.* Doctrine should be ascribed only to his Power. Though Saint *Paul* had a more  
 S E R M. learned Education than all the rest of the Apostles, yet he declares, for himself  
 XV. as well as the rest, *We speak not in the Words which Man's Wisdom teacheth.* He  
 was concerned only to shew their Sincerity in *Manifestation of the Truth*; but he  
 freely owns, *We have this Treasure in Earthen Vessels, that the Excellency of the  
 Power may be of God, and not of us.* We need not be ashamed to confess, either  
 to *Jews* or *Gentiles*, that the Apostles were neither great Rabbies, nor learned Phi-  
 losophers, but may own that they were mean and obscure Persons: for though  
 this was made an Objection against their Doctrine, by such as were too much  
 puffed up with these Advantages to examine it, yet the Objection, when granted,  
 turns into a very strong Argument for that Doctrine which it was intended against.  
 And therefore Saint *Chrysostom*<sup>a</sup> blames the inconsiderate Weakness of a certain  
*Christian* in his Time, whom he had once heard disputing with an *Heathen* in  
 Defence of Saint *Paul*, and contending, that he was more learned and eloquent  
 than *Plato*; whereas his Adversary stiffly maintained the contrary. Each of these  
 Disputants (says he) did really argue against his own Cause: For it was agreed  
 that the Success of Saint *Paul's* Doctrine, and the Numbers converted by it, was  
 much greater than that of *Plato*. And therefore it could not depend upon human  
 Learning or Eloquence, if *Plato* had so much the Advantage in these Accomplish-  
 ments; but must be attributed to a more powerful Cause. For it cannot well be  
 denied, that so surprizing an Event, as was that of the mighty Spreading of the  
 Gospel in so short a Time, must be ascribed to something more than human, since  
 it is acknowledged, that the most probable human Means of doing it were want-  
 ing. But besides the speedy Manner of propagating the Gospel, we are to consider  
 likewise,

2. THE marvellous Effects which it had upon those who attended to it, where-  
 ever it was propagated. It was not only entertained as a Piece of News, or a  
 Matter of Speculation, the Thoughts of which would soon pass away, and be dis-  
 regarded; but it had a deep and lasting Influence, upon the Lives and Manners  
 of those who entertained it. The Reformation which it wrought, both in the  
 Principles and Practices of such as were converted to it, and the great Courage  
 and Stedfastness with which they persisted in it, notwithstanding all possible hu-  
 man Discouragements, is a strong Argument that there was something more than  
 Human in it. I have, in a former Discourse<sup>b</sup>, observed, how ineffectual the Rea-  
 sonings of Philosophers were, towards the producing such a Reformation, either  
 in Religion or Morality, as they could see was greatly wanted. How very few  
 were those whom, with all their boasted Learning and Eloquence, they could per-  
 suade to abandon a vicious Life, and steddily to embrace the Practice of a strict  
 and sincere Virtue? To refrain from falling in with the most absurd Superstition  
 and Idolatry, which they had once been accustomed to? or to make the con-  
 stant Belief of the Soul's Immortality, a prevailing Principle of Action? But  
 where-ever the Doctrine of the Gospel obtained, What a Change did it presently  
 work, both in the Minds and Behaviour of Men? No sooner did they become  
*Christians*, but they presently forsook all their former vain Conversation, and be-  
 came quite other, or *new Men*; leading Lives so innocent and virtuous, that they  
 challenged their Enemies to object any thing against them, but their professing  
 the Name of *Christ*, and renouncing all the Idolatry of their Neighbours, as they  
 did in spite of all Opposition. How stedfastly did all Ranks and Degrees of them  
 (even such as the Gentile Philosophers thought too mean and illiterate to con-  
 verse withal) maintain and profess the Belief of another Life, and a future Judg-  
 ment, and an eternal Reward for blameless Souls, and Punishment for the Wicked  
 and Ungodly? With what Constancy did they despise all the Considerations of  
 this World, which could be proposed to them, in comparison of an happy Re-  
 surrection? And how freely would they offer themselves to all manner of Tor-  
 ments, and the most cruel Kinds of Death, rather than do any Thing which

<sup>a</sup> *Chrysostom. Hom. 3. in 1 Ep. ad Corinth.*

<sup>b</sup> SERM. XL.



might look like denying their *Saviour*, or renouncing their Hope in him, from *Leng.* whom they expected this Reward of Immortality? The Heathens were amazed *SERM.* at this, and called it *Obstinacy*<sup>c</sup>, and punished them for it. But in other Respects, *XV.* they owned that they had nothing criminal to charge them withal; as *Pliny*, in his Letter to *Trajan*, testifies. This is a Point which the Primitive Apologists insist very much upon, that no other Institution of Philosophy or Religion could shew so much Innocence and true Virtue in Practice. *Origen*<sup>d</sup> not only affirms, that the Churches of *Christ* being compared with other Communities of Men, among whom they dwelt, in respect of their Lives and Manners, were as *Lights in the World*; but he challenges his Adversaries to examine the several Ranks and Degrees, or States and Conditions of Life, as common People, Senators, or chief Rulers of a *Christian Church*, and an *Heathen Community*, in such Cities as *Athens*, *Corinth*, or *Alexandria*, for Instance, and compare them together; and then declare, whether even the worser Sort of Christians, comparatively in each Degree, did not far excel the very best Heathens, of the like Degree. Now this would hardly have been so constantly insisted upon, if the Fact had not been past Denial. <sup>e</sup> *Julian* himself, as great a *Bigot* as he was to the *Heathen Superstition*, yet fairly owns, that the Sanctity of Life, and exemplary Charity of the *Christians*, had induced so many to despise the [*Heathen*] Gods, that if the *Gentile Priests* ever hoped to restore their ancient Worship, they must endeavour to reform their own Lives by their Example.

Now that the few poor, unlearned, and plain Men, destitute of all probable human Assistance, sent out separately, into several distant Parts of the World, should in a few Years bring over to the same Faith in *Christ*, and Obedience to him, vast Numbers in every Country where they came, of all Ages, Degrees, and Conditions of Life, of different Professions, Persuasions, and Religions, notwithstanding the Prejudices of former Custom and Education, against all the Power, Interest, Authority, and Learning of the World, and amidst all the malicious Contrivances of Men and Devils, continually opposing and raising Persecution against it; and that this Faith should make so deep an Impression upon the Minds of Men, as immediately to change their Principles and Practices, and in a compendious manner to make them shew such a true Philosophy in their Lives and Actions, and such a Constancy in adhering to it, even unto Death, as the most learned among the *Heathens*, after much Study, could do little more than talk of: these are such Effects, as no considering and unprejudiced Man can easily deny to be the Work of God. Therefore it must be concluded, either that the Original of this Doctrine, and the Miracles by which it was confirmed, and by which the Apostles were enabled to plant and propagate it, were such as they are in Scripture represented to be; or else, that this wonderful Effect, of which the Marks are still so plain and lasting, was produced in a Manner, if possible, yet more miraculous, that is, without any such Means at all. Now is it not really much more probable, as well as more agreeable, to all the Accounts which History gives us of those Times, that such Miracles were wrought at the first Planting of the Gospel, and that divers of them continued to be wrought for a considerable Time, (as we are told they did, 'till great Numbers were every where convinced of the Power of the Spirit which went along with Christianity, and the Prejudices of Men against it were somewhat abated) than that it should gain such a strong and lasting Establishment, as we see in Fact it has done, contrary to all probable human Means, and yet be without such Divine Evidence?

I OBSERVED, in the Close of my last Discourse, that some of the ancient and bitter Enemies of Christianity have, by their very Way of writing against it, given Testimony to the Miracles of our Blessed Saviour, in Point of Fact, in ascribing

<sup>c</sup> *Plin. Ep. 19. lib. 10.*

<sup>d</sup> Αἱ δὲ Θεοὶ Χριστῷ μαθητεύσαντες ἐκκλησίαι, συνεζέταζον αὐτὰς ὡς παρρησιασθῆναι δέμων ἐκκλησίαις, ὡς φασὶν εἶναι ἐν κόσμῳ· τίς γὰρ ἐκ αὐτῶν ὁμολογήσεται, καὶ τὰς χεῖρας τῷ δυνάμει τῆς ἐκκλησίας, καὶ συγκεῖσθαι βελιόνων ἐλάτῃς, πολλῶν κρείττους τυγνάνειν τῶν ἐν τοῖς δέμοις ἐκκλησιῶν; ἐκκλησία μὲν γὰρ Θεοῦ, φέρεται εἶπέν, ἡ Ἀθήνησι παρεῖα τις καὶ οὐσαυτὴς — &c.

*Vid. Orig. contra Celf. lib. 3. pag. 128, &c.*

<sup>e</sup> *Juliani Epist. 40. ad Arfacium.*



Leng. them to Magick, and setting up, in Competition with them, strange Feats said to  
 SERM. have been done by *Pythagoras*, *Abaris*, *Aristeas*, or *Apollonius*, and the like. Now  
 XV. that which led them into this Way of opposing Christianity was not, as I conceive, barely the Relation which the Apostles give of the Miracles of *Christ*; but the Notoriety of Fact, that both the Apostles themselves, and many other Christians, for a considerable Time after them, did continue to work Miracles in the Name of *Jesus*: For *Origen*<sup>f</sup>, in many Places, testifies, that divers miraculous Powers did continue till his Time. This the most inquisitive Heathens could not tell how to deny; and therefore to avoid the Force of the Arguments which the Christians drew from thence, to prove that *Jesus* was a Divine Person, and his Doctrine from God, and to keep up the sinking Credit of Gentile Philosophy, upon which they valued themselves among the People, some of them had recourse to these two Methods; which yet in the End turned to the Establishment of the Gospel, and the utter Confusion of Pagan Idolatry.

1. THEY raked together all the old Stories they could meet withal, of strange Things done by some ancient Philosophers, or even Magicians and Impostors, to which they add new ones of their own, and these they set up in Opposition to the Miracles of *Christ* and his Apostles. To this purpose *Celsus*<sup>g</sup> brings in the Story of *Aristeas* from *Herodotus*, who tells us, he heard such a Story told at *Proconnesus*, that *Aristeas* died there, but that his Body could not be found dead or alive, for seven Years; but that afterwards he appeared and made Verses, then disappeared again; and above three hundred Years after was seen at *Metapontum*, where he ordered them to erect an Altar to *Apollo*, and a Statue for himself close by it, telling them he had once been the Crow which came with *Apollo* into *Italy*, and after he had said this he vanished again. To this *Celsus* adds the Story of *Abaris*, riding in the Air upon an Arrow of *Apollo* over Sea and Land, (as *Porphyry*<sup>h</sup> also relates it) and of *Hermontimus Clazomenius*, whose Soul often left the Body, and wandered up and down without it.

THESE strange Stories *Celsus* makes a Shew of believing; and so does *Hierocles* after him; who for the same purpose highly commends the Life of *Apollonius Tyanæus*, writ by *Philostratus*. Now this Way of arguing from these Stories was this: <sup>i</sup> *If such great Men as these, of whom such strange and wonderful Things are related, are not worshipped as Gods, why should the Christians account JESUS a God, and pay him Divine Honour, only for having done such Wonders as they relate of him?* This was the Sum of their Argument, supposing the Facts related of these famous Men were believed to be true, as they pretended to think them. But it would have served their Purpose as well, if they were false, provided they could but thereby have reduced the Miracles of *Jesus* to the same Level with these Impostures. And I make no question but it was with this View, that *Philostratus* writ the Life of *Apollonius*; which he did so many Years after his Death, that he might say what he pleased of him. And with the like Design both *Porphyry* and *Jamblichus* may be justly supposed to have writ the Life of *Pythagoras*, so full of strange and absurd Stories, that one could hardly think it possible for Men of Sense to tell them, with so grave and serious an Air, as they do; unless it were to serve so malicious a Purpose.

Now what say the Christian Apologists to all this? <sup>k</sup> Why first they deny, that there was any competent Evidence to prove those strange pretended Facts; as there was for the Miracles of *Christ* and his Apostles, which were attested at the Time they were done, by such Witnesses as, with the utmost Constancy even unto Death, affirmed them upon their own Knowledge. And then in the next Place, suppo-

<sup>f</sup> Vide Orig. contra Cels. pag. 5, 34, 53, 124, 337, &c. <sup>g</sup> Ibid. pag. 125, &c. Herod. lib. iv. cap. 13, 14.

<sup>h</sup> De vita Pythag. Sect. 29.

<sup>i</sup> Of this see Origen against Celsus, in the third Book at large; and the following Words of Hierocles, in his Book against the Christians, as they are preserved by Eusebius in his Answer, are to the same purpose: Τινος δὲ ἕνεκα τῶν ἐμνησθῆναι; ἵνα ἐξ ὧν συνέλθῃεν ἡμετέραν ἀκερῆ καὶ βεβαίαν ἐφ' ἐκείνῳ κρίσιν, ἡ τῶν Χριστιανῶν κακότης. ἔπειτα ἡμεῖς μὴ τὰ τοιαῦτα ποιούμενα, εἰ θεὸν, ἀλλὰ θεοῖς κεχαρισμένον ἄνθρωπον ἡγούμεθα· οἱ δὲ δι' ἐλίγας τερατείας τινάς; τὸ Ἰησοῦν θεὸν ἀναγγέλλουσι. Vid. Euseb. contra Hieroclem. cap. 2.

<sup>k</sup> Of this see Origen's third Book against Celsus, and Eusebius against Hierocles.



sing some of them to have been true, they were very absurd and ridiculous; and if there was any Thing more than the Jugglings of crafty Men in them, it was fit to be ascribed only to lying and wicked Spirits. Besides, they tended to no manner of good Purpose, such as reforming the Minds and Manners of Men, or reclaiming them from their Idolatry, to a more rational Worship of the Supreme God, but the quite contrary. Nor did they pretend to be designed for any such good Use by the Providence of God; nor were any of their Authors foretold by ancient Prophets, as *Jesus*, and the Design of his coming into the World, was long before he came: Neither lastly, had they any such Effect as followed from the Miracles and Doctrine of *Jesus*, by which such vast Numbers in all Places were brought to embrace a new and holy Institution, and to adhere to it, forsaking their former wicked and superstitious Customs, notwithstanding all human Opposition made to the contrary. For these Reasons, and also because they saw some visible Powers exercised in the Name of *Jesus*, they justly thought his Doctrine to be the Doctrine of God, and his Miracles divine Works; but the others to be Delusion. But then,

2. THAT the Opposers of Christianity might seem to have something among them, like that Power of the Spirit of God, whereof they saw some visible Effects among Believers, many of the Philosophers themselves of that Time, and some of *Julian's* great Friends and Acquaintance afterwards, betook themselves to the most Diabolical Superstition, Charming, Necromancy, Invocation of Dæmons; pretending to Divinations, Ecstasies, Inspirations, Nocturnal Visions, and frequent Conversings with their Gods and departed Heroes. These wicked and enthusiastical Practices they called *Theurgical*, as if there had been something Divine in them. And by this Method they hoped to keep the old Gentile Idolatry in some Credit; as whoever will take the Pains to read and consider the Lives of those Philosophers, written by *Eunapius* their great Admirer, will easily see. But this Pretence to something supernatural, though it might for a Time impose upon the ignorant and superstitious Part of the Gentiles, could not bear up against the Light of the Gospel. Nor could such Works of the Devil endure the Sight of the meanest Christian alive; nay, they complained, that the very Bodies of some of them, when dead, hindered all the Influence of their Gods from shewing itself. However, both these Methods of opposing Christianity plainly shew, that the Facts upon which it was founded were undeniable; and that they had nothing better to say against them, when they took such Courses to defend their own Superstition, as the more ancient Philosophers of Reputation (such as *Anaxagoras*, *Socrates*, *Plato*, *Xenophon*, or *Aristotle*) would have been ashamed of.

THUS the wonderful Manner in which Christianity was so speedily propagated, and the Effects which for a long time followed it, are a standing Argument of its Truth and Divinity, and give a more than human Testimony to the Revelation contained in Holy Scripture.

IF it should be alledged, that the great Progress and large Extent of *Mahometanism* is an Objection to this Way of arguing, since we do not allow that to have any thing divine in it: The Answer, I think, is very obvious, That it is not the Extent of worldly Dominion, or the mere Number of outward Professors, upon which we lay the Stress of this Argument, but that inward Conversion of the Minds of Men, which attended the Christian Doctrine, not only without, but contrary to, all human Power and Policy. *Mahomet* did not pretend to prove his Doctrine by Miracles, nor to reform the Lives of Men by it, but to form a worldly Dominion upon the Corruptions both of *Judaism* and *Christianity*: Out of which he framed a Doctrine to draw in both; of which he did not offer to convince Men otherwise, than by worldly Motives and the Power of the Sword.

<sup>1</sup> Τὸ μὲν γὰρ βελομένη ἢ πρὸς τὰ ἄλλα τῆς Ἀρείας ἀρχαίας ἐπεμαρτύρετο· καὶ τὸ ὠφελεῖν τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἡγεῖται, τὰ ἐλκυστὰ (ὡς οἶσι) ἐπεδείκνυτο, σὺν ἑκατέρῃ λέγειν· ἡμεῖς δὲ, ἐπὶ τὰ περὶ τοῦ Ἰησοῦ διηγήμεθα, καὶ τὸ τυχεῖν φέρειν δόξαν· λογίαν περὶ τὰ ταῦτα γινώσκοντες, τὸ τὸ Θεὸν βεβηλῶς εὐσεβεῖν τὸ ἄλλο· Ἰησοῦ ὡς σωτῆρα τοῖς ἀνθρώποις, λόγον βεβαιήσαντες μὲν τοῖς ἀπὸ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἀποστόλοις ὡς περὶ θεμελίου καὶ ἀκατακλόμενης οἰκοδομῆς καὶ χριστιανισμοῦ, ἐπιτιθεμένους δὲ καὶ τῆς ἐξ ἑκείνου ἐκείνης, ἐν οἷς σὺ ἐλίγας θεωρεῖται τὸ Ἰησοῦ ὀνόματι, καὶ ἄλλαι τινες ἐπιφάνειαι σὺν δόξῃ φέρουσιν ἐπιτελεῖν. Orig. contra Celsum, lib. 3. pag. 127.

And



*Leng.* And it is no Wonder that nominal Christians, and others who had no real inward  
 SERM. Religion, should come apace into such a Doctrine as gratified their Lusts, when it  
 XV. had once gotten an Establishment. But did ever any of *Mahomet's* Disciples make  
 such Numbers of Converts out of the Bounds of their own Dominions, or where  
 they and their Profession were continually persecuted? So that if we consider the  
 different Manner and Means of propagating Christianity, and the Doctrine of  
*Mahomet*, it will plainly shew their different Original. And as to the intrinsick  
 Excellence of the several Doctrines, they will bear no Comparison.

I SHALL now briefly add the Second Thing which I proposed in the beginning  
 of this Discourse; namely,

II. THE successive Accomplishment of Prophecies delivered by *Christ* and his  
 Apostles.

I SHALL not here mention the Prophecies of the Old Testament, relating to  
 the Person of the *Messias*, and the Time in which he lived upon Earth, and which  
 were remarkably fulfilled in their Season; because, though this be a good Argu-  
 ment for the Truth of the Christian Religion, and has accordingly been insisted  
 upon by divers good Authors, yet it does not so properly come under the Point  
 which I am now upon. My Design is only to mention some of those Predictions  
 which had their Completion afterwards, and which are a sort of lasting Miracle  
 to succeeding Ages, and a Monument of Divine Power and Wisdom manifesting  
 itself in the Gospel. For it must be owned, that the certain foretelling of future  
 contingent Events, especially at a great distance, and such as have no antecedent  
 Probability, is an Instance of Divine Wisdom. And in this Sense *the Testimony of*  
*Jesus is the Spirit of Prophecy*. I shall instance in such as these which fol-  
 low.

I. HE told his Disciples what should befall them after his Ascension into Hea-  
 ven; as, That they should be endued with Power from on high, after that the  
 Holy Ghost was come upon them; That they should work great Miracles in his  
 Name, such as Healing the Sick, Casting out Devils, and Speaking with new  
 Tongues; That they should be brought before Kings and Rulers for his Name's  
 sake; That they should be delivered up to be afflicted, and persecuted, and put to  
 Death, and should be hated of all Men for his sake: and yet notwithstanding all  
 this Opposition and ill Treatment, which they were to meet with, he likewise  
 foretold them what Progress they should make, and that they should be Witnesses  
 unto him, not only in *Judea* and *Samaria*, but even to the uttermost Parts of  
 the Earth; and that for this purpose he would give them a Mouth and Wisdom,  
 which all their Adversaries should not be able to gainsay or resist. Now whoever  
 reads the *Acts of the Apostles*, and other genuine Remains of Antiquity, will find  
 all these Things eminently fulfilled.

2. THE Destruction of *Jerusalem* was very particularly foretold by our Saviour,  
 with abundance of very remarkable Circumstances which were to attend it; as  
 to the Time, that it should be before that Generation was all dead, but yet not  
 'till the Gospel was first published into all Parts of the World: as to the Signs  
 foregoing it, that there should be Wars and Rumours of Wars, Earthquakes, Fa-  
 mines and Pestilences, that there should also arise false *Christs* and false Prophets,  
 who should deceive many; that there should be fearful Sights, and great Signs in  
 the Heavens attending it; and by particular Marks and Tokens of approaching  
 Vengeance his true Disciples had Warning given, by Flight to escape that dread-  
 ful Calamity. As to the Destruction itself, he foretold that it should be the most  
 terrible and amazing of all that ever befel any City or People, insomuch that of  
 their famous Temple, which had been so long in building, there should not be  
 left one Stone upon another which should not be thrown down. The Circum-  
 stances of this Prophecy are so particular, and the fulfilling all of them so remark-  
 able, that whoever reads the History of this great Calamity in *Josephus*, and com-  
 pares



pares it with our Saviour's Prediction in the Evangelists, cannot fail of acknowledging the just Vengeance of God upon that obstinate Generation, for rejecting and crucifying their *Messias*, and must at the same time own it for a signal Evidence of that Divine Spirit by which he spake, and of the Truth of his Doctrine.

Leng.  
 S E R M.  
 XV.

3. THE Dispersion of that People after the Ruin of their City and Government, was likewise plainly foretold, (*Luke xxi. 24.*) *There shall be great Distress in the Land, and Wrath upon this People: And they shall fall by the Edge of the Sword, and shall be led Captive into all Nations: And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the Time of the Gentile be fulfilled.* Now the State of the *Jews* is, to this Day, a standing Evidence of the Truth of this Prophecy, they being by the Providence of God kept a distinct People, from all those among whom they are dispersed, which cannot be said of any other ancient Nation; and yet they have been often oppressed and persecuted, hated and despised where-ever they came; but not yet suffered to return to their own Land, to set up their ancient Worship in it, though they have several Times attempted it. <sup>m</sup> *Julian* himself (perhaps out of Spite to this Prophecy, or at least out of Hatred to the *Christians*) promised them in a Letter, to restore their *Holy City* and Worship: And we are told, that he sent *Alypius* with a Commission to see this Design executed, and to lay out a prodigious Sum upon rebuilding the Temple; but that, <sup>n</sup> *when he set about the Work in earnest, terrible Balls of Fire broke out about the Foundation, which several Times destroyed the Workmen, and made the Place inaccessible, so that the Design was forced to be entirely laid aside.* This Account we have not only from Christian Writers and Enemies of *Julian*, but from *Ammianus Marcellinus*, one of his great Admirers. *Jerusalem* still continues trodden down of the *Gentiles*; that is, in Subjection and Bondage to such as are not *Jews* by Profession or Extraction; and so it is likely to continue 'till the Time of the *Gentiles* be fulfilled, or 'till the Gospel has had its full Course among them. And thus, as the Gospel was first published among all Nations before this wonderful Dispersion of the *Jews*, as it were for a Testimony against them where-ever they should be scattered; so they were soon sent after it, to be a continual and living Monument of the Truth of it, among all People where they dwell.

4. THE Progress of Christianity, and the State of the Christian Church, was likewise foretold, both by our Saviour in divers of his Parables, and in other express Declarations, and likewise farther by his Apostles in their Writings; as, That it should be every where persecuted at first, and yet should every where prevail, and from small Beginnings, like a Grain of Mustard-seed, should grow into a great Tree: That the *Gentiles* should be called into it, and the *Jews* for a Time reject it: That in the latter Days there should be grievous Corruptions in the Church, in many particular Instances, which have already been sadly verified.

Now though it should be owned, that some of the Things foretold were not unlikely to happen, as that the Apostles should be persecuted, and that the Gospel should meet with great Opposition, considering how *Christ* himself was treated, and how contrary his Doctrine was to the Corruptions of Men; yet all of them were Things contingent; and the Apostles might not thus have exposed themselves, if the Thing had been of Men. But their Success was so unlikely, and so were most of the other Things foretold, that as nothing but Divine Wisdom could foresee them, so nothing but Divine Power could bring them to pass.

As for those Prophecies concerning a better State of the Christian Church, the Fulness of the *Gentiles* coming into the Profession of the Gospel, the Conversion of the *Jews*, the Destruction of *Antichrist*, the prevailing Power of the Gospel, and others, whose Time of Accomplishment is yet future; though we cannot at present make use of them as Arguments against Unbelievers, yet as those who

<sup>m</sup> Vid. *Juliani Ep. 25.* Edit. Spanhem.

<sup>n</sup> Cum itaque rei idem fortiter instaret Alypius, juvaretque provinciae rector, metuendi globi flammaram prope fundamenta crebris assultibus erumpentes, fecere locum, exustis aliquoties operantibus, inaccessum; hocque modo, elemento destinatus repellente, cessavit inceptum. Vid. *Ammiani Marcell.* lib. 23. cap. 1.



*Leng.* believe the Scriptures justly expect that these Prophecies will all be fulfilled in their  
 S E R M. Season, so when the Time of their fulfilling comes, they will be a successively  
 XV. growing Evidence of the Truth and Divinity of the Christian Doctrine, such as no  
 ~~~~~ Imposture can shew.

AND now from what I have said upon this Subject, I hope, it will appear, that, over and above a more certain Historical Evidence of Facts related in the New Testament, than can be expected for any mere human Record so ancient, we have also subsequent Instances of Divine Power, giving Attestation to the Christian Revelation, and Instances of Divine Wisdom and Fore-knowledge, appearing in that Revelation itself, and manifested to be such by their Accomplishment. And if this be not such a powerful Means of Conviction, as they had who saw the Miracles of our Saviour, and heard his Doctrine, who were Witnesses of his Death, and conversed with him after he rose from the Dead; who beheld his Ascension into Heaven, and were themselves made Partakers of the miraculous Powers of the Holy Ghost, by Virtue whereof they planted this Doctrine in the World: yet at least it is such an Evidence of the Truth of what they affirmed, as as impossible to be counterfeited; but the more it is examined, the stronger it will appear. And therefore we are inexcusable if we refuse to embrace a Doctrine of such infinite Moment, and which comes to us so divinely recommended.

How shall we escape, if we neglect so great Salvation, which at first began be spoken by the Lord himself, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him: God also bearing them Witness both with Signs and Wonders, and with divers Miracles, and Gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own Will.

S E R M O N XVI.

Preached November the 3d, 1718.

St. L U K E vii. 23.

And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me.

THESE Words are the Conclusion of that Answer which our Saviour returned to the Message of *John the Baptist*, who sent two of his Disciples to him with this Question, *Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?* It appears evident, from other Passages in the Gospel, that *John* himself did not want an Answer to this Question for his own Satisfaction: for he knew already that *Jesus* was the *Christ*; and his Disciples own, *that he bare Witness to him*. But they, it seems, were unwilling to believe this, and were offended, that the Fame of *Jesus* should thus eclipse that of their Master; though this was no more than what he had foretold, when he said of *Jesus*, *He must increase, but I must decrease*. And therefore to cure them of this Prejudice, *John* sends them to *Jesus* himself, for their farther Conviction. Our Saviour knowing the Occasion of their coming, did, *in the same Hour*, as the Evangelist tells us, *cure many of their Infirmities and Plagues, and of Evil Spirits, and to many that were blind he gave Sight*. And then he sent them away, not with a direct Answer in Words to their Question; for that would have been only his own Witness to himself; but with a Message that implied more than a direct Answer, namely, an evident Proof from his Miracles, that he was the Person they enquired about: *Go, and tell John what Things ye have seen and heard, how that the Blind see, the Lamé walk, and the Lepers are cleansed, the Deaf hear, the Dead are raised, to the Poor the Gospel is preached*. He knew that by this Message *John the Baptist*, who himself did no Miracles, might have a fair Opportunity to convince them, even out of the ancient Prophets, that these miraculous Works were the Marks of him *that should come*, and that they needed not look for another. However, in Conclusion, he adds, *Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me*: Which Words may seem to imply a tacit Reproof to them, for their former unreasonable Prejudice against him, and a Caution to beware of the like for the future. Or if we take the Words as a general Proposition, expressing the Happiness of those who are so honest and impartial, in the Search of Truth, as to lay aside all Prejudices, and to overcome all Temptations which might hinder the sincere embracing of it, they plainly intimate that, notwithstanding all the Evidence of Miracles which our Saviour gave of his being sent from God, yet there would be some, either so perverse, as obstinately to resist his Doctrine out of worldly Prejudice, or so weak, as in Time of Temptation to be offended at it, and fall away from the Profession of it.

I HAVE, in a former Discourse^a, endeavoured to shew the Reasonableness of expecting some Revelation from God, considering the general State and Condition of Mankind: And^b I have likewise considered the Nature of that Evidence which

^a SERM. XI. ^b SERM. XIV. and XV.

Leng. we have from Miracles, that the Christian Religion is founded upon such a Revelation. In doing of which, I hope, I have also prevented all Objections against the Truth of the Facts upon which it is founded, by shewing, that we have sufficient Grounds of Assurance for them, notwithstanding they were done so long before our Time. And admitting the Facts, or Miracles, to be true, I have shewn that there can be no just Pretence for refusing to submit to their Evidence; unless it can be proved, that there is something in the Doctrine or Revelation, thus attested, which makes it incapable of any Proof; that is, something plainly unworthy of God, and repugnant to his Nature and known Attributes, so that the Doctrine and the Testimony would contradict one another: From which Imputation I have all along supposed the Christian Doctrine, delivered in Scripture, to be free; and shall now endeavour briefly to shew the Reasonableness of such a Supposition, by taking Occasion, from these Words of our Saviour, to consider some of those Prejudices or Grounds of Offence, which some Men take at the Christian Revelation; either upon account of the Person or Doctrine of its Author, and from which they would seem to persuade themselves, that it is such a Dispensation or Institution, as is not sufficiently suitable to Divine Wisdom; and therefore that they may be excused if they neglect or disregard it.

BUT before I proceed to the Particulars, I cannot well avoid taking notice of one general Observation, which may very properly be made upon much the greatest Part of the Objections against the Christian Revelation: Which is this, That they very much resemble those Objections, which Atheistical Men make against a Providence of God, Making and Governing the Natural World, from some supposed Defects and Blemishes in the Frame and Order of it. For as these Men vainly imagine, that if they had had the Management of all Things, they would have made the World after another Fashion, and have prevented abundance of Faults and Inconveniences, which they now pretend to espy in it; so the others fancy, that if they had been to frame an Institution of Religion for Mankind, it should have been liable to none of these Objections, but should, without any Difficulty, have been approved by the Reason of all Men. But now, as in the one Case, those who have studied the great Volume of Nature with most Exactness, and gone farthest into the Reasons and Dependencies of one Thing upon another, have found out many Things to be great Beauties in the whole, and of excellent Use; and therefore admire the deep Wisdom and Contrivance of their Author, in those very Things, which others, less curious, have taken for Deformities, because of their own Ignorance of those admirable Purposes to which they are designed: So in the other Case, those who have studied the Books of Holy Scripture with the greatest Care, and considered the Christian Oeconomy, in all its Parts, with the utmost Diligence, have alway most admired both the Divine Wisdom and Goodness which is discoverable, in many of those Instances, which others, not considering the Relation between God and Man, nor viewing the Correspondence which one Part of the Divine Dispensation has to another, make to be Objections against them. Some of these I shall now proceed to mention.

1. As to the Person thus declaring the Will of God to Man; his mean and low Condition in the World, his suffering State, and especially his ignominious Death, has been sometimes urged as a great Objection: And it was Matter of great Offence at first both to *Jews* and *Gentiles*. But considering the Design upon which he came into the World, this is a very unreasonable Prejudice; and proceeds purely from too great a Value for the outward Things of this World, and too little Concern, and too low an Opinion of a Future State; to rectify which mistaken Notions of Things was one great End of his Coming. If the *Jews* would have consulted their own Scriptures impartially, they might have known, that many of their own Prophets and Holy Men, whom they acknowledged to have been Messengers of God, were Men of Suffering, and grievously persecuted, sometimes even unto Death; and farther they might have known, from those very Prophets who foretold his Coming, that he was to be a *Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with Grief,*

Grief, and that *his Soul*, or Life, was to be made an Offering for Sin. This therefore ought not to have offended them. The *Gentiles* also might have learned, from some of their most esteemed Philosophers, That outward Pomp and Greatness, Power and Riches of the World, are rather to be despised than admired, by a truly great and wise Man; That no good Man is the less beloved of God, for being placed in a State of Poverty and Contempt, as *Epietetus*, and other excellent Persons were; or for being hated and put to Death, by his Fellow-Citizens, as *Socrates*, one of the brightest Instances of Heathen Virtue, was; That the most eminent Examples of Virtue, and such as were fittest to teach and reform the World, had been such as were tried in the Furnace of Affliction; That Misery and Suffering is so far from being inconsistent with the greatest Virtue and Goodness, that according to *Plato's* Reasoning (in the Person of *Glauco*) to make the Character of a truly Righteous Man unquestionably perfect, he must be stripped of all Things in the World, even of the Credit and Reputation of being a Righteous Man; because if he be thought a just Person by the World, Honour and worldly Advantage will be his Portion; and then it cannot be known, whether it be real Virtue, or the Advantages of it, which he pursues: He must therefore be reckoned wicked and unjust, while he retains the strictest Justice and Integrity unshaken, even unto Death — and then the Consequence of this will be, (even in the Opinion of those who follow only the Appearances of Virtue or Justice) that such a just Man will be exposed to all manner of Suffering and ill Treatment, and at last be put to a cruel Death, or crucified. Now if this be the utmost Pitch of real Virtue, and not pretended, then certainly the suffering State of our Saviour, ought not in Reason to be an Offence to those who consider him as a Person coming to give the most perfect Example of the most difficult Virtues: and especially one who comes to teach Men to expect another Life after this, in Comparison of which all the Sufferings of this World would vanish, and be as nothing. For could any State of Life be more proper to teach Men this, than that which he voluntarily took upon him? Or could he more effectually recommend Humility, Patience, Contempt of the World, and Obedience to the Will of God, even unto Death, any other Way than this? If suffering unjustly was that which brought the greatest Glory to the Characters of divers eminent Persons, even in the *Pagan* World, it ought not by them to have been thought unworthy of God, to make the Captain of our Salvation perfect through Sufferings.

Leng.
SERM.
XVI.

2. It has likewise been alledged, as a Prejudice against him, that he should promise eternal Life to his Followers, who was not able to rescue himself from temporal Death. But this Prejudice supposes him not to have died upon Choice but Necessity, as it is supposed that none of those great Men of former Times, who are celebrated for being willing to suffer Death, rather than stain their Character of Virtue, would have chosen this Part, if both their Life and their Character could have been preserved together: and therefore if he had not Power enough to do both these, why should we, say they, believe him able to make good such a Promise, as none of those great Men or Philosophers ever offered to make? This Objection, I say, supposes, that he had not Power both to lay down his own Life, and to take it again, as he declares he had. And that he really had this Power, he gave this plain Demonstration in Fact, that he rose again from the Dead. Now could any Instance possible be given more proper to convince Men, that he had Power to raise others, and make good his Promise of giving them eternal Life, than this raising of himself from Death? This is an Evidence which needs no long Deductions of reasoning to make it good;

^c Τὸν δίκαιον ἰσχυρὸν τῷ λόγῳ, ἀνδρὶ ἀπλῶν καὶ ἡλικίᾳ, κατ' Αἰσχύλον, ὃ δοκεῖν αὐτῷ εἶναι ἀγαθὸν ἐθέλοντα. Ἀφαιρετέον δὲ τὸ δοκεῖν, εἰ γὰρ δόξει δίκαιος εἶναι, ἔστιν αὐτῷ τιμὰ καὶ δωρεὰ, δοκῶντι τοιούτῳ εἶναι. ἀδελφὸν ἔν τε δίκαιον, ἔν τε δωρεῶν τε καὶ τιμῶν ἕνεκα, τοιοῦτος εἶη· γυμνωτέον δὲ πάντων, πᾶσι δικαιοσύνης, καὶ ποιητέον ἐναντίως ἀδικεῖν τῷ παρτέρῳ (ἀδίκῳ ἴσ.) μηδὲν γὰρ ἀδικῶν, δόξαν ἔχεται καὶ μεγίστην ἀδικίας. ἢ ἡ βεβαιωσιμότης εἰς δικαιοσύνην τῷ μὴ τέλει καὶ κακοδοξίᾳ, καὶ τῷ αὐτῆς γινωσκόμενῳ. ἀλλ' ἦτοι ἀμετάστατον μέχρι θανάτου. δοκῶν μὲν εἶναι ἀδικῶς ἀδικεῖν, ὡς δὲ δίκαιον — ἐρεῖσι ὅτι ταῦτα ὅτι ἔτω ἀδικεῖν καὶ δίκαιον μαρτυρώσει, σκελετώσει, δεδήσει, ἐκκαυθήσει τὸ φθαρτὸν τῶν τελευτῶν, πάντες κακὰ παθόντες, ἀναγκασθὲν δὲ. Plato de Repub. lib. 2. pag. 361.

Leng. but is plain to every Capacity that owns his Resurrection; of which we have such
 S E R M. Assurance from a sufficient Number of competent Witnesses, as makes it impossi-
 XVI. ble for any reasonable Man to deny it. If his voluntary suffering of Death there-
 fore, besides the other great Ends of it, carries his Example as far as possible, his
 Resurrection secures us of the Truth of all his Promises. But,

3. THAT he should likewise be declared to be the Son of God, who thus suffered and died for Mankind, is what some are yet more offended at. So great a Condescension in God Almighty seems to them unbecoming the Divine Majesty, and is therefore incredible. As in one Case they object against the State of his Humiliation, so here they object against the Dignity of his Person. This Prejudice arises from hence, that the Goodness of God in this Dispensation, and his Love to Mankind is so far above their Conception. And yet these very Men would sometimes persuade us to have such an unreasonable Opinion of the Divine Goodness, as quite to destroy all Notions of his Justice. They would rather suppose him never capable of being displeased with the greatest Wickedness of Mankind, than to be reconciled upon such Terms, as are so much above their Comprehension. But now certainly, though no human Understanding was able to find out such a Method of reconciling these Attributes of God to each other, yet being made known to us by God himself, it must needs appear, to all reasonable and unprejudiced Persons, a Method of infinite Wisdom, thus to provide an Expiation for the Sins of Men, in a Way satisfactory to his Infinite Justice, asserting the Honour of his Laws, and declaring his perfect Hatred of all Sin, and yet at the same Time consistent with an infinite Goodness and Compassion to sinful Men.

THIS gives us a full Assurance of the Mercy of God, upon our true Repentance, and a just Ground of Hope, that our Sins are forgiven, through the Merits of Christ. Which full Assurance we could not have had, upon such sufficient Grounds, without a plain Revelation from God; because, though Men should naturally have the highest Thoughts of the Divine Goodness, yet considering how much every thinking Man must needs be conscious to himself of his own Unworthiness of such Goodness, by reason of his manifold Transgressions of the Law of Nature, he could never otherwise be free from great Doubting and Uncertainty about it. And much less could he entertain any certain Hope of an Eternal Reward from a Being so justly offended at him. It seems indeed to have been a general Notion of Mankind, That God would admit of some sort of Expiation for Sin, which occasioned so universal a Practice of sacrificing: but that any Sacrifice which Man could offer should be a valuable Consideration for this Purpose, cannot easily be conceived. But when we are once assured that God has provided himself such an all-sufficient Sacrifice, we can then see a Reason why he suffered such an universal Opinion to prevail. And we can farther argue, with
 Rom. viii. Saint Paul, *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all;*
 32. *how shall he not with him also freely give us all Things?* And though this Method of Redemption argues an infinite Condescension in Almighty God to his Creatures, which of Right they could neither claim nor expect, yet this ought not to offend us: For since he intimately takes care of every Part of his Creation, we ought not to think any Rational Creature below his Notice; nor are we to imagine that his Ways of Caring for them are only like ours. It is unreasonable to measure his infinite Goodness by our shallow Conceptions of it. We ought rather to admire the deep Wisdom of it, and to own, with the Apostle, that *it*
 1 Tim. i. *is a faithful Saying, and worthy of all Acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into*
 15. *the World to save Sinners.*

4. It is objected, that we cannot comprehend the Manner in which the Divine and Human Nature are united in the Person of our Redeemer: But certainly this ought no more to be a Prejudice against the Belief of it, when it is revealed to us, and that Revelation well attested by God, than the Union of Soul and Body in ourselves, though we know not the Manner of it, can hinder us from being fully convinced of the Thing by its Effects. And that this partaking
 of

of the Divine and Human Nature renders him a proper Mediator and Intercessor, with God for Man, cannot reasonably admit of any Dispute.

Leng.
SERM.
XVI.

5. THE Time of our Saviour's coming into the World is sometimes objected against, as if it had been too long delayed, supposing it ever to have been necessary, or even so highly beneficial to Mankind as is pretended. But this Objection cannot be made by any one, who does not pretend to be as competent a Judge of the Fitness of the Time, as God Almighty. And it has been by some observed to be much like the Atheists Objection against God's making of the World, That if he had made it at all, he would surely have made it sooner. And yet by the very Nature of the Thing, if it ever was created, that is, ever had a Beginning, there must have been a Time when it was just so near that Beginning, or was just of the same Age, as it is now supposed to be. So that this Objection is either of no Force at all, or the World must never have been created, that is, it must have been from Eternity; against which there are yet greater Objections. And therefore it is much more reasonable to suppose, that he who made it knew the fittest Time. So he who sent his Son into the World, for the Salvation of Mankind, and to reveal his Will by him, best knew the proper Time to send him. Not that Men were utterly destitute of the Mercy of God, or of all Means of Salvation, who lived before his coming in the Flesh, as the Objection must suppose, if it have any Force in it: for the Promise of Salvation, by him, is near upon as old as the first Transgression; and the Effects of his Propitiation have respect to Times past, as well as future. And since, by the Divine Dispensation, he was to appear once for all, we may, without contradicting any Principle of Reason, suppose the Time in which he did appear to have been the fittest. But this is not all that may be said to induce us to approve of it. For we may also discover several Instances of such Fitness, (though we cannot pretend to know them all) which make that Time, in which he did come, appear to have been very proper: As for Instance, That it was when Men stood in the greatest need of such a Revelation as he came to make, being, by degrees, sunk into the utmost Corruption both of Religion and Morality; when divers other Means of reforming them had quite lost their Effect; when Philosophy, upon mere Principles of Reason, had in vain attempted to reclaim them, and confessed itself unable to do it without farther Instruction and Assistance from Heaven; when the World had been prepared by ancient Prophets, for a long Time, to expect his Coming; And when the outward State of the World was such, as to make his Coming the most beneficial, the Providence of God having gradually disposed all Things for it, so that his Doctrine might have the best Opportunity both of being known and examined, that Men might not be said to be surprized into it. These and divers other Instances of the Fitness of that Season, in which he appeared, have been more largely treated of by those who discourse concerning *the Fulness of Time in which God sent his Son into the World*; and therefore I do but just mention them.

6. NOT much unlike to this Objection of Time is that of the Place, or People, among which he appeared. ^a*Celsus* thought it a ridiculous Thing to imagine, That God should send his Son among the *Jews*, an obscure and despised People; he ought not, in his Opinion, to have confined him to such a small Corner of the World, but to have inspired more like him, and have sent them into all Parts of the World. And the like Objection is still urged by some against the Christian Revelation, or indeed against the Necessity of believing any Revelation at all to be useful. If it was either necessary or intended for any great Good to Men, it ought, they say, to have been universal: And this Want of Universality they think to be a sufficient Reason for rejecting it. But now, if the Foundation of this Objection, or Prejudice, against the Christian Revelation were good, it would prove farther than these Men pretend; for, as has been observed by others, ^e it would prove

^a Vid. *Orig. contra Cels.* pag. 329.

^e Dr. Clarke of the *Evidences of Natural and Revealed Religion*, p. 216. Now, says he, (not to take Notice here, that it is by no means impossible, but all Men may be capable of receiving some Benefit from a Revelation, which yet a great

Leng. prove against all the Obligations of Natural Religion, which it is certain all Men
 SERM. have not equal Means or Abilities of knowing and cultivating. And the same
 XVI. Way of arguing would prove, that God ought to have made, not only all Na-
 tions of Men, but even all particular Men, equal in all other respects, both of
 Faculties and Opportunities of Improvement, that they might all be capable of
 equal Degrees of Happiness. But as God was under no Obligation to make all
 his Creatures of one Rank; so neither was he obliged to make all Men of the
 same Condition, nor to give them all the same Kind or Degree of Happiness;
 nor consequently to afford the same Means of Knowledge to all equally. Revela-
 tion is an Act of Favour, which though such as were well disposed to receive it,
 and were sensible of the Want of it, had good Grounds to hope for, yet it could
 not of Right be demanded; that is, God was not obliged to make it equally to
 all Men. God has indeed been so far good to all Men, as to give them some
 Means of knowing him, and by that has laid them under an Obligation of seeking
 after him, and likewise (as I have formerly^f shewn) of enquiring, whether he
 has made any farther particular Revelation of his Will, or of being ready to em-
 brace it upon good Evidence. And if they do this sincerely, they will either find
 where that Revelation is, or not be condemned for the Want of it, where they
 have no possible Means of finding it. But, by the way, those who make this Ob-
 jection, cannot be of the Number of those who want these Means; because
 they must have heard of the Revelation, before they could take this Offence at it;
 and therefore may be justly condemned for ungratefully rejecting such a gracious
 Offer, upon so weak a Pretence. For is it not unreasonable to despise a Favour
 offered to ourselves, only because we know not the Reason why it has not yet
 been offered to some others? Though it may in Time be offered to all that are
 found worthy of it.

AND then as to the Place where the Gospel first began to be preached; if it
 be allowed reasonable, that the Author of it should be a real Man, his Birth and
 Conversation, his Life and Death, and Resurrection, must be in some particular
 Country, though the Influence of his Doctrine may reach to all that are willing
 to receive it. And why should not *Judæa* be that Country, as well as any other?
 Human Prejudice may prefer others, as all Nations are partial to themselves;
 but God, who sees not as Man sees, knows the fittest Place, as well as Time, for
 opening his Dispensations towards Man; and since he chose this, we ought to
 acquiesce in it. Not but that an unprejudiced Man may observe some Reason for
 the Choice: For in this Place alone the Knowledge of the One True God had
 been preserved, while all other Nations had worshipped false Gods. Here were
 kept the ancient Oracles of God, and the Writings of the Prophets, which had
 testified before of his Coming: Here therefore were the Evidences kept, whereby
 it could be most easily proved, that he was the Person designed and sent by
 God. And there was no Necessity that he should appear bodily in other Na-
 tions, since the Truth and Divinity of his Doctrine being once thus established,
 the Benefits of it are not confined to this, which *Celsus* in Contempt calls a *Cor-
 ner of the World*: But his Apostles were sent out into all Countries, with the
 Power of his *Spirit*, to convince the *Gentile* World, that by him Salvation is
 come to them also, if they will receive it. And it is offered to all in such a Way
 as to leave Room for the Trial of their Virtue and Sincerity, in admitting or re-
 jecting it; Assistance being offered, but no Force put upon the Freedom of Human

great Part of them may never have heard of;) If these Mens Reasoning was true, it would follow, by the same Argu-
 ment, that neither was Natural Religion necessary to enable Men to answer the Ends of their Creation. For, though all
 the Truths of Natural Religion are indeed certainly discoverable by the due Use of Right Reason alone; yet it is evident,
 All Men are not endued with the same Faculties and Capacities, nor have they all equally afforded to them the same
 Means of making that Discovery; as these Gentlemen themselves upon some Occasions are willing enough to own, when
 they are describing the barbarous Ignorance of some poor Indian Nations: And consequently the Knowledge of Natural Re-
 ligion being in Fact by no means universal; it will follow, that there is no great Necessity even of That; but that Men
 may do very well without it, in performing the Functions of the Animal Life, and directing themselves wholly by the
 Functions of Sense. And thus these Gentlemen must at last be forced to let go all Moral Obligations, and so recur una-
 voidably to absolute Atheism.

^f SERM. X. and XII.

Will

Will in it. And this is indeed by some made an Objection against the whole Oeconomy of Man's Salvation, That God did not rather prevent all Sin and Evil from entering into the World at first, or at least when it had entered, rather root it out all at once, than take such a slow Method for the Cure of it. Why was such a Reformation, say they, suffered to be necessary? But as this Objection would destroy the original Liberty of Human Actions, and take away the Foundation of all Virtue, as well as Vice; so it is not levelled only against the Wisdom of God in Man's Redemption, but against his Providence in general, of which, in the present Case, I suppose Men to be already convinced; and therefore shall not resume the Arguments for it, which are common to all who believe a wise and good Providence governing the World.

Leng.
SERM.
XVI.

BUT besides the Prejudices which Men take at the *Person* of our Saviour, the Time, and Place, and Manner of his appearing in the World; they likewise take offence at his *Doctrine*, which by some is accused for being too *Plain*, by others for being too *Sublime* and *Mysterious*. Sometimes the Preceptive Part of it is represented as *deficient*, sometimes too *rigorous* and severe: and, upon the whole, it is objected, that, in Fact and Experience, it does not appear *effectual* enough to secure the End it proposes.

1. IT is accused of too great *Plainness* and *Simplicity*. The *Greeks*, or *Gentile* Philosophers, *sought after Wisdom*, expected Things should be proved to them in a Philosophical Way, and delivered with all the Advantages of Human Art and Eloquence; but instead of this, they met with a plain and artless Narration of an unexpected Matter of Fact, of the Life and Miracles, the Death, and Sufferings, and Resurrection of *Jesus Christ*. And they are directed to obey his Precepts, and to believe in him as the Author of Life, and Judge of the World. This to them *seems Foolishness*. But is not this in Truth an high Commendation of this Doctrine, that it should prove a Matter of such high Importance, by an Argument so level to all Capacities, as that of *Christ's* Resurrection was, for proving the Truth of what he taught, particularly, concerning the Resurrection, and a Future State? Their Way of Teaching looked as if they thought only Men of Learning and Leisure worth taking notice of; but Divine Wisdom is more universally beneficent, and respects not Men according to these outward Advantages. And then for the Preceptive Part of this Doctrine, though it be plain and short, yet it is delivered, as Laws ought to be, in Terms of Authority, giving the most excellent Rules of Life, that are any where to be met withal; and adding the greatest Sanction to them, by setting before Men the highest Rewards and Punishments, for the Observance or Non-Observance of them. What can be more worthy of God than a Doctrine so plain, and yet so full and perfect, reaching to the very Thoughts and Intentions of the Heart? I am afraid the true Reason of Men's Prejudice to this Plainness, is, that it awakens their own Consciences too much against them, that it would be the most effectual Means of reforming them, but that they *bate to be reformed*.

2. THE Doctrine of Christianity is sometimes represented as too *sublime* and *mysterious*, declaring to us Things above our Comprehension; and for that Reason some Men are prejudiced against it. I shall not mention Particulars, because they have been Subjects often treated of by others, in particular Discourses: I shall only observe in general, that if a Revelation from God is necessary to teach us any Thing, concerning the Divine Nature, and his Designs towards Mankind, and in relation to a Future State, more than what we could naturally know before, it must of Necessity be something which our Reason could not discover; and as far as the Nature of an Infinite Being is concerned in it, it must exceed our finite Capacities, by the very Nature of Things: And yet the Belief of it when so revealed, may be very reasonable, so long as it implies no Contradiction. And indeed, it would be a much greater Prejudice against a Revelation's being from God, if it had no Marks in it of any thing, but what Human Reason could have discovered without it.

Leng. 3. **THOUGH** the Morality of the Christian Doctrine has been generally allowed S E R M. to excel all others in Perfection, yet there are not wanting some who seem to tax XVI. it with *Deficiency*. An Author, whom I have formerly mentioned, in his high *Admiration of Epicurean Friendship*^g, tells us, that *we Christians ought to have an higher Veneration of Epicurus for this Virtue of Friendship than Cicero^h, because even our holy Religion itself does not any where particularly require of us that Virtue*. This Hint he took from another Authorⁱ, who has insinuated, that *some of the most heroick Virtues have little notice taken of them in our holy Religion; and particularly that Private Friendship and Zeal for the Publick and our Country, are Virtues purely voluntary in a Christian: They are no essential Parts of his Charity*. And they would both seem to defend this strange Kind of Reasoning from the Concession of an Eminent Divine, who owns that the Word *Friendship*, in their Sense, is not to be found in the New Testament; which, though it be true, is nothing to their Purpose, but very much the contrary. By *Friendship*, they tell us, *is not meant that common Benevolence and Charity, which every Christian is obliged to shew towards all Men, and in particular towards his Fellow Christians, his Neighbour, Brother and Kindred of whatever Degree; but that particular Relation, which is formed by a Consent and Harmony of Minds, by mutual Esteem, and reciprocal Tendernefs and Affection; and which we emphatically call Friendship*. But now is such a Relation, in itself, abstracted from those mutual good Offices by which it is cultivated, any Virtue? Surely no more than Brotherhood, or Neighbourhood, or Acquaintance, or a Similitude of Studies or Education, which are not always in our own Power. But those Offices which adorn this Relation, which alone are the Virtues of it, are commanded by the Christian Law, which obliges us to every Thing that is *virtuous and praise worthy*, or even of *good report*, and, in the most disinterested manner, to do good where we hope for no Return. We are commanded to *be of the same Mind one towards another*, and to perform all the Offices of *mutual Affection and Benevolence*: And when this happens to be more remarkably done between a few, then it is called *Friendship*: but then it is only limiting those Expressions of Kindness and Good-will to some Particulars, which the Christian Doctrine commands more universally to every one that is capable of receiving them. There is not any particular Office of this admired *Friendship*, but what is more eminently contained in Saint Paul's Character of *Charity*. And whoever reads the New Testament will find, that to love our Neighbours as ourselves, which is the great Mark of a Christian, comprehends all the Offices of Kindness which one Man can owe to another in any Relation. And that there are Occasions on which we *ought to lay down our Lives for the Brethren*, which is as far as any Rational Friendship can pretend to go. A Friendship built upon any Principles, distinct from those which Christian Charity commends, is so far from being a great Virtue, that it is nothing else but a *Want of Social Affection* to the rest of Mankind. And the like may be said for the *Love of our Country*, which can never be a Virtue, but when it proceeds upon a Principle of universal Benevolence, and a *Zeal* to do the greatest Good we can to Men. But, I hope, I need not dwell upon so unreasonable a Prejudice.

4. **ON** the other hand, some are offended at the Christian Doctrine, because the Precepts of it are too *severe*. It commands us to mortify all our Lusts and Passions, and to deny ourselves to a great Degree, and to part with all Things, even Life itself, rather than deny or renounce *Christ* and his Gospel. This, our Saviour knew, and foretold, would be a great Prejudice to worldly Men, and that when *Persecution should arise because of the Word*, they would presently be *offended*. But it is not therefore a just Objection against its being a Doctrine wor-

^g Discourse of Free-Thinking, pag. 130.

^h By the way, this Author would either impose upon us, or is grossly mistaken himself, in what he there quotes out of Cicero: Because it is the Epicurean who speaks in that Passage, and not Cicero himself, who in many Places declares, that upon Epicurean Principles there could be no such Thing as Friendship. See his Offices, lib. 1. cap. 2. De Amicitia, cap. 13. De Finibus, lib. 2. c. 24, &c. lib. 3. c. 21. And De Nat. Deor. lib. 1. c. 44. and elsewhere.

ⁱ Characteristicks, in the Essay on Freedom of Wit and Humour, pag. 98.

thy of God. For as to the Strictness of its Precepts, in respect of *denying Ungodliness, and worldly Lusts, and living soberly, righteously, and godly in the World*; and the restraining all evil Thoughts and Desires, as well as Words and Actions, it is what will approve itself to be just and right, to the calmest Reason of Mankind. And there is no Duty of Life enjoined in it, but what some or other, even of the best Heathen Philosophers, have upon occasion commended as most noble, and best becoming a truly virtuous Mind; though they have not always constantly insisted upon them. And as for the Obligation of suffering for the sake of *Christ*, when we are called to it, it is abundantly compensated by the Promise of Grace and Assistance, and by that clear Discovery of a future Reward, which the Gospel has promised to all that obey it. This makes it highly reasonable in respect of our Lawgiver and Judge, who has provided such an infinite Reward for us: And it may likewise be the most generous Way of doing good to Mankind, thus to offer up our Lives to maintain the Truth of that Revelation, which is so *worthy of all Men to be received*. But if Mr. *Hobbes's* Doctrine were true, (*viz. that^k at the Command of the Magistrate a Man may lawfully deny Christ with his Mouth, because then the Action is not his that denies him, but his Sovereign's.*) As this Revelation, so highly beneficial to Mankind, could never at first have been propagated in the World, so it could never long subsist in it, if the Powers of the World should think fit to forbid it, as they did at the first. And upon the same Foot any other Truths may be destroyed, if no Man be obliged, either in Honour or Conscience, to maintain them.

5. IT is farther objected, That the Doctrine of the Gospel has not proved so effectual as it ought to have done, if it had been from God. Christians, they say, are greatly divided, though the Gospel pretend to be a Doctrine of the greatest Unity and Peace; and they are many of them very corrupt in their Lives and Practices, though they affirm it affords much greater Assistances towards Purity and Holiness of Life, as well as stricter Precepts, than any other Institution. This, I confess, is a sore Reflection upon such as call themselves Christians, which it highly concerns every one of them to do all he can to confute, by living more agreeable to his Profession. But though this may be too great an Occasion of Offence, for which they that give it must at last be severely answerable; yet, I hope, it is no just Objection against the Truth of that Doctrine which so entirely forbids it: For if it were, it would be an Objection against all good Doctrine whatever, and even against Reason itself, which all allow is as much contradicted by the vicious Lives of those who profess they ought to be governed by it. The Gospel was not intended to force Men to be good, but to give them the best Motives and Encouragements to be so, and then to leave them to their Choice, whether they would comply with the Terms of it. And as I have, in a former Discourse, observed, that the Gospel had undeniably this good Effect upon the Lives of the first Christians, which continued as long as it was professed only by those who did really believe it; so, I doubt not, but the like Effect would appear again, if those who believe it, upon a sincere Conviction of its Truth and Excellency, could be separated from those who only put on an Outside Profession of it, because it is the Custom of the Country. And even, as the Case now stands, where there is so great a Mixture of many Nominal, with a few Real Christians; I hope, if a Christian Country were compared with any others, that have never heard of the Name of *Christ*, an impartial Man would find a very considerable Difference in the Lives and Manners of Men, to the Advantage of the Christian Cause; even though it be allowed, that the Corruption of Christianity may have made some Men much worse than they would otherwise have been.

I do not pretend to have mentioned all the particular Prejudices of Men against the Christian Revelation (some of which are grounded upon difficult or misunderstood Places of Holy Scripture, or not being sufficiently acquainted with

^k *Leviathan, Part 3. chap. 43. pag. 271.*

Leng. ancient Customs and Languages, and so wresting what they do not understand, to
 SERM. the Perversion of what they do.) But from the Nature of these which I have
 XVI. touched upon, as most common, we may be able to form some Judgment of the
 rest; and to see that they proceed not from any real Defect in the Gospel, which
 can make a wise and unprejudiced Man think it the less worthy of God: and
 therefore since it has all the Evidence, which I have mentioned before, that any
 Revelation can have, of its being from God, we can have no just Reason to re-
 fuse our Assent to it; but rather heartily to thank God for having *called us to this*
Estate of Salvation through Christ, and to *hold fast the Profession of our Faith*
without wavering; and to study the Holy Scriptures constantly, *which are able to*
make us wise unto Salvation, and to shew us more and more the *Excellency of the*
Knowledge of the Gospel of Christ, by which we shall be saved, unless we have be-
 lieved in vain.

I SHALL conclude all with that Exhortation of the Apostle, with which I be-
 gun my first Discourse, *Take heed, Brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil*
Heart of Unbelief, in departing from the Living God.

Now unto him who is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless
before the Presence of his Glory with exceeding Joy: To the Only Wise God,
our Saviour; be Glory and Majesty, Dominion and Power, now and for
ever. Amen.

A N
E N Q U I R Y
I N T O T H E
C A U S E and O R I G I N
O F
E V I L :

In which the
Principal PHÆNOMENA of NATURE
Are Explained, according to the True
PRINCIPLES of PHILOSOPHY;
More particularly
In Answer to Mr. *BAYLE*, and other Defenders of the
Ancient *Manichæan* Scheme of Two Independent Principles.

B E I N G
The Substance of Eight SERMONS preached at the Parish Church
of Saint *Mary le Bow*, in the Year 1719.

At the LECTURE founded by
The Honourable *ROBERT BOYLE*, Esq;

B Y
JOHN CLARKE, D. D. Chaplain in Ordinary to his Majesty.

ISAIAH xlv. 7. *I form the Light, and create Darknes: I make Peace,
and create Evil: I the Lord do all these Things.*

TO
The RIGHT HONOURABLE
RICHARD, *Earl of* BURLINGTON;

The Right Reverend Fathers in GOD
CHARLES, *Lord Bishop of* NORWICH,
EDMUND, *Lord Bishop of* LINCOLN,
SAMUEL, *Lord Bishop of* CARLISLE,
AND
WHITE, *Lord Bishop of* PETERBOROUGH;

T R U S T E E S

Appointed by
The Most Reverend Father in God, **THOMAS**, late
Lord Archbishop of *Canterbury*; the last surviving
TRUSTEE named by

THE HONOURABLE
ROBERT BOYLE, Esq;

THIS
D I S C O U R S E

Is most humbly Dedicated.

T H E
P R E F A C E.

THE Foundation of all Religion, both Natural and Revealed, being laid in these two Things, That GOD is, and that He is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek him; it becomes every one, who has any Regard for his present and future Happiness, to endeavour after the clearest Evidence, and highest Conviction possible, of such substantial and important Truths. Now there are only two Ways, by which we can be satisfied in these Particulars: And they are, either an Examination of the Works of the Creation; or else an extraordinary Manifestation of the Will of God from Heaven. By the former of these, we come to the Knowledge of the Existence and Wisdom and Goodness of that Being, who is the Cause of such wonderful and surprizing Effects; and by the latter we are assured of the final Justice and Equity of all his Dispensations and Proceedings towards his Creatures. It is the first of these only, that the following Discourse relates to; For the Design of it is to vindicate the Works of the Creation, in those Particulars, which have been thought beneath the Skill of an infinitely wise and good Being. Though atheistical and prophane Men have not been able to shew wherein such Arguments are defective, as have been urged to prove from a Necessity of Nature, that an infinitely Wise and Good Being must exist; yet they have imagined, from the Observation of Facts, that the contrary may be made appear from hence, That there are some Parts of the Creation, which are so irregular and imperfect, as not to be reconcileable with the Notion

I

we

we have of so perfect and excellent a Cause ; and consequently, that these two Things are inconsistent with each other. I have endeavoured to make appear the Weakness and Folly of these Men ; by showing, that the principal Instances alledged by them, prove the direct contrary to what they are alledged for ; and that it is wholly owing to their Ignorance of the Ends and Uses of those Things, that they have raised such Objections against them. For upon the most exact Enquiry, according to the nicest Observation, and strictest Rules of Reasoning ; every Particular, which we have any Means of knowing the Circumstances of, so as to be able to judge for what End and Purpose it was made, is demonstrably made the most useful and serviceable, that the Nature of the Thing is capable of, in order to attain that End or serve that Purpose ; And we ought by Parity of Reason to conclude the same of those Things which we have not had Opportunity or Means of coming to so thorough a Knowledge of. The farther we carry our Improvement, the more universal does this Argument appear, 'till at last it must coincide with the other Method of Arguing from the necessary Perfections and Attributes of the Deity ; so that they mutually strengthen and confirm each other. These are sufficient to convince any sincere and unprejudiced Person, so far as Religion and Virtue is concerned ; but against Obstinacy and Vice, there is no Remedy of this Kind.

A N
E N Q U I R Y
I N T O T H E
C A U S E and O R I G I N
O F
E V I L.

WHAT is the *Cause* and *Original* of *Evil*, is a very important and very ancient Question: Every Man's own Experience of what befalls himself in this present State, and a small Observation of the Condition of others, sufficiently teaches him, how imperfect *Things* are, and what *Disorder* and *Confusion* they are liable to. The natural Faculties and Powers of Men, either with regard to their Minds or their Bodies, are at best very weak and infirm. Their Understandings are capable of comprehending but a few Truths; their Judgment is very unsettled; and their Practice consequent thereupon, as irregular and uncertain. And with respect to their Bodies, the *Materials* of which they are composed, the *Manner* in which they are framed, and the *Laws* they are subject to, render them very frail and brittle; but of a few Years Duration at longest, and subject to Dissolution much sooner. And the same may be affirmed of the *Things* without us, the whole *material* World. The present Constitution of it is such, as makes it liable to perpetual Changes and Alterations, which cause great *Disorder* and *Irregularity*. This is what we observe in the *Things* themselves considered singly: But if we apply them to each other, and see their mutual Influences and Effects, the *Disorder* will appear still the greater. From the strict Union of Soul and Body, the spiritual and rational Part, with the material and sensitive, arises that Discord described by Saint Paul: *But I see* (or I experience) *another Law in my Members warring against the Law of my Mind, and bringing me into Captivity to the Law of Sin which is in my Members.* Thus the Dictates of Reason and Conscience, draw Men one Way; and the Suggestions of Sense and Passion, entice them another. From the various external Objects which the World affords, all which are accommodated to the Bodily Senses, and make such deep Impressions on the Mind, and often interfere with what calm and impartial Reason directs, arise also many *Neglects* and *Abuses*. These St. John comprehends under *the Lust of the Flesh, and the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride*

Clarke.

The Introduction, concerning the present State of Things.

Rom. vii.

23.

John ii.

16.

^a Τῆς οὐσίας τὰ ἀγαθὰ ποιεῖν καὶ τὰ κακὰ. Max. Tyrius, Dissert. 25.

Clarke. of Life, which is all that is in the World. To these we may add the many natural Evils which Men are subject to, and which are entirely out of their Power, such as Sickness, Pain, and Death; either arising from within themselves, or being caused from without, by Storms, by Pestilences, by Savage Creatures, and the like. And to compleat the whole, we may take in the moral Evils which proceed from the Abuses of Men: Under which are comprehended all Kinds of Sin and Wickedness, the State of which is eloquently described by the Prophet David, and from him by St. Paul: *There is none righteous, no not one; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God, they are all gone out of the Way, they are together become unprofitable, there is none that doeth good, no not one; their Throat is an open Sepulchre, with their Tongues they have used Deceit, the Poison of Asps is under their Lips; whose Mouth is full of Cursing and Bitterness, their Feet are swift to shed Blood; Destruction and Misery are in their Ways, and the Way of Peace have they not known, there is no Fear of God before their Eyes.*

Rom. iii.
10, 18.

The different Effects
of such Considerations
upon Men.

Upon religious Persons.

Psal.
lxxiii. 16.

Jerem. xii.
1.

Upon irreligious Persons.

The Epicurean Notion.

SUCH a Kind of Survey as this, of the present Condition and Circumstances of Things, has led Men to enquire into the Cause and Reason of them: Which has produced different Effects, according to their respective Inclinations or Views. Pious and sincere Men have been very much shocked and disturbed with such Observations, and have been sometimes driven to complain of the Dispensations of Providence. Thus King David says: *When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me.* And thus the Prophet Jeremy complains of God Almighty's Dealings with Men: *Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee; yet let me talk with thee of thy Judgments: Wherefore doth the Way of the Wicked prosper? Wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherously?* On the other hand, wicked and irreligious Men have taken occasion from hence, absolutely to deny the Providence of God, that he at all created the World, and all Things in it, at the Beginning; or that he has since had any Hand or Share in the Government of it. This was the Notion of the Epicureans of old, as appears from the Account ^b Lucretius himself gives of them: *The System of the World (says he) could not possibly be the Effect of a Divine Power, because it is so very faulty.* And the Instance he gives of its Faultiness is, *è Cæli Rationibus*, from Astronomy, or the Constitution of the Heavens; that the Inclination of the Ecliptick to the Equator is such, as renders the greatest Part of the Earth uninhabitable, both to Men and other Creatures; the Heat in the Torrid, and the Cold in the Frigid Zones, being so excessive great, that they cannot subsist under it. This is his principal Argument: To which he adds the Usefulness of a great Part of the Earth to Mankind, by reason of the many Seas and Rocks and barren Heaths, and the Difficulty of the other Parts yielding Fruit, without great Labour in tilling and manuring it; and after all, its Liableness to have them destroyed by Storms and Tempests, or by wild Beasts and Animals. In a Word, their Method of arguing I shall give you in the Words of a learned Writer thus: *The Topick of Evils in general, is insisted upon by them (the Epicurean Atheists) after this manner: The supposed Deity and Maker of the World was either willing to abolish all Evils, but not able; or he was able, but not willing; or thirdly, he was neither willing nor able; or else, lastly, he was both able and willing: This latter is the only Thing that answers fully to the Notion of a God. Now that the supposed Creator of all Things, was not thus both able and willing to abolish all Evils, is plain, because then there would have been no Evils at all left; wherefore since there is such a Deluge of Evils overflowing all, it must needs be that either he was willing, and not able, to remove them, and then he was impotent; or else he was able, and not willing, and then he was envious; or lastly, he was neither able nor willing, and then he was both impotent and envious.*

^b Nequaquam nobis divinitus esse creatam
Naturam mundi, quæ tanta est prædita culpa. Lucret. lib. 2. § 180.

^c Dr. Cudworth's Intellectual System, pag. 78. and Laërtius de Ira Dei, cap. 13.

This was their Method of arguing concerning *natural Evils*, such as *Pain* and *Clarke*. *Trouble*, and the like: And their Objection about *moral Evils* was much the same, *viz.* That if the Divine Providence concerned itself at all in the World, it would appear in Human Affairs, in protecting the Innocent and Virtuous, and in discouraging the Prophane and Wicked; but they observed *that all Things came* Eccl. ix. 2. *alike to all, that there was one Event to the Righteous and to the Wicked, to the Good, and to the Clean, and to the Unclean, to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not; as is the Good, so is the Sinner, and he that sweareth, as he that feareth an Oath.* Thus the profane *Dionysius*, notwithstanding his open Contempt, and ridiculing of all Religion, and every sacred Thing, ^a yet lived free from Divine Vengeance, and died peaceably in his Bed. And *Diogenes* the Cynick, though himself acknowledged the Being and Providence of God, yet was forced to confess, upon seeing the Prosperity of *Harpalus*, a famous Robber and Pirate in those Times, who committed many great and notorious Wickednesses, that he did *Testimonium dicere contra Deos*, bear Testimony against the Gods. This Argument is at large set forth by the *Academick* in *Tully*; where, by a long Induction of particular Instances of very great and enormous Wickednesses committed by Men in ^f private and in publick, he endeavours to shew, that it had been better for Mankind if they had had no *Reason* at all given them, than such a Share of it as they have, which they so perpetually abuse; and consequently, that God did not herein consult the Good and Benefit of Men, and therefore they are not under the Direction of his Providence.

The Notion of the Stoicks and other Philosophers.

AND as the Philosophers amongst the Heathen reasoned in this manner, concerning the present State of Things, so likewise was it the Subject Matter of the Poets, who entertained their Readers and Hearers with lively Representations of the many Evils and Misfortunes that Mankind were subject to. Thus *Homer* represents *Jupiter* as having two Hogsheds set before him, the one filled with *Evil*, the other with *Good* Things, a Mixture of which he dispenses amongst Mankind, sometimes taking out *Evil*, and sometimes *Good*. And this Topick has supplied the Tragedians with Plenty of Instances to exercise their Inventions, and to divert their Auditors. After this manner have Atheistical Men treated this Subject of the *Original of Evil*, so as to collect from the Observation of Facts, either that there was no God at all, by whom all Things were at first created; or at least, that they are not at present under his divine Care and Inspection.

Poetical Representations of the same.

THERE are others who have been more modest in handling this Subject; who, whatever the natural Consequence of their Solutions may be, have not so barefacedly attacked the Wisdom of Divine Providence. And these are they who have admitted Two First Principles or Causes of all Things; the one the Original from whence every thing that is good proceeds, and the other the Original from whence all *Evil* springs. This was the principal Doctrine of the ancient *Magians*, of the Religion of the *Medes* and *Persians*, established for many Ages in the Eastern Countries, before the Reign of *Darius*; a short Account of which a learned ^h Author gives us in the following Words: *They held the Being of two First Causes, the first Light, or the Good God, who was the Author of all Good; and the other Darknes, or the Evil God, who was the Author of all Evil; and that of the Mixture of these two, as they were in a continual Struggle with each other, all Things were made.* And to this the following Words of the Prophet *Isaiab* seem to relate, being spoken by him to *Cyrus* King of *Persia*, and therefore probably had reference to this Sect of the *Persians*, who then held *Light* and *Darknes*, *Good* and *Evil*, to be the Supreme Beings, without acknowledging the

The Notion of the ancient Magicians.

^d Hunc nec *Olympius Jupiter* fulmine percussit, nec *Æsculapius* misero diuturnoque morbo tabescentem interemit; verum in suo lectulo mortuus in Tympanidis rogum illatus est, eamque potestatem quam ipse per scelus nactus erat, quasi justam & legitimam hæreditatis loco tradidit. *Cicero de Nat. Deor.* Lib. 3. § 35.

^e *De Natura Deorum*, Lib. 3. § 26.

^f Sentit domus uniuscujusque, sentit forum, sentit curia, campus, focii, provinciæ, ut quemadmodum ratione recte fiat, sic ratione peccetur, &c. *Ibid.*

^g Δοιοι γὰρ τε π.δοι καλανεα? εν Διδς &δετ. Lib. ult. *Iliad.*

^h *Dr. Prideaux, Scripture Connexion*, Vol. 1. pag. 169. Fol. Edit.

Clarke. one only true God, who is the sole and original Author and Cause of all Things: *I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hath not known me, that they may know from the rising of the Sun, and from the West, that there is none beside me: I am the Lord, and there is none else, I form the Light and create Darknes, I make Peace and create Evil, I the Lord do all these Things.* These first Causes or Principles of Good and Evil, were by the Persians called *Oromasdes* and *Arimanius*; by the Egyptians, *Osiris* and *Typhon*; by the Chaldeans, *Good* and *Bad Planets*; by the Græcians, *Jupiter* and *Pluto*; and the good Principle was also called *God*, and the bad Principle the *Devil*, as *Plutarch* informs us. And ⁱ in the early Ages of Christianity we find this same Opinion brought out of Persia by one *Manes* a Persian, who introduced it into the Christian Religion, and formed the Sect of the *Manichæans*: Of whom ^k *Eusebius* gives this short Account: *That he vented false and atheistical Opinions, patched up out of an infinite number of old extinguished Heresies, which he brought from Persia into this Part of the World, and spread the deadly Poison of them about; from whom the impious Name or Sect of the Manichæans is derived, and still remains amongst many.* To this, ^l *Socrates* the Historian adds the Opinion itself: *He attempted, says he, to introduce the Opinion of Empedocles and Pythagoras into the Christian Religion; he asserted that there were two Natures, as Empedocles also did, the one good, and the other evil; the evil he called Discord, and the good Friendship.* This Sect was at first settled in many Provinces, spread itself very much, and continued a long Time^m; insomuch that in the Seventh Century, under the Name of *Paulicians*ⁿ, from one *Paul*, who became their Head, it had over-run the whole Roman Empire; and no less than an Hundred Thousand of them were massacred in *Thrace* and *Bulgaria*; which yet did not extinguish them, but in Time their Absurdities were so gross that it came to nothing. But it has been lately revived by a ^o learned Person, who pretends to have cleared it of all those Absurdities, and affirms that there is no other Way of accounting for the present Matters of Fact, and that the *Phænomena* of Nature cannot be explained by any other Hypothesis. He endeavours to illustrate his Doctrine in a feigned Dispute between *Zoroaster* and *Melissus*: The former defends the Two Principles of the *Manichæans*, and latter the One Principle, viz. God, to be the Cause and Author of all Things. Their ridiculous Inventions of a long War between the Two Principles, and the Fights and Prisoners which the *Manichæans* speak of, he wholly gives up, as too absurd to be defended. For, as himself says, ^p *in order to render the Hypothesis the less offensive, the long War between the two Principles, which the Manichæans speak of, might be denied, as also their Battles and Prisoners rejected: So that the whole might be reduced to the certain Knowledge the Two Principles have; that one could never obtain of the other, but such and such Conditions; and thus an eternal Agreement might have been made upon this Foot.* After this Preface, he states the *Phænomena* in the following manner: ^q *Man, says he, is wicked and unhappy. This every one knows by what he experiences within himself, and by that Commerce he is obliged to have with his Neighbours. Five or six Years Observation, is sufficient fully to convince any one of the Truth of this; but they who live longer, and are engaged in Worldly Affairs, know it still more clearly. Travels afford perpetual Lectures upon this Subject; which shew every where Monuments of Mens Misfortunes and Wickednesses; as appears by the many Prisons, Hospitals, Gibbets,*

Isaiah xlv.
5, 6.

The Manichæan Notion.

The same Notion revived by Mr. Bayle.

ⁱ In the Third Century.

^k Δόγματα γὰρ μὴ ψεύδῃ καὶ ἀθῆα ἐν μυθῶν τῷ πρῶτα λαὶ ἀπεσχηκῶν αἰρέσεων συμπεφορημένα κατήλυσας, ἐν τῷ Περσῶν ἐπὶ τῷ καθ' ἡμᾶς οἰκισμῶν, ὡπὲρ τινα θανατηφόρον ἰόν ἐξωμόρευσεν, ἀφ' οὗ δὴ τὸ Μανιχαϊκὸν θύοσι βίς ὄνομα τοῖς πολλοῖς εἰς ἴτι νῦν ἐπιπολάζει; τοιαύτη μὲν ἔν ἡ ἐ τῇσδε τῷ ψεύδων ἡμῶν γνώσεως ἀπεδείξαι καὶ τῶς δεδηλωμένους ἀποφύεσθαι χρῆναι. *Eusebii Eccles. Hist.* lib. 7. cap. 25.

^l Τὸν Ἐμπεδοκλέους ἐ Πυθαγόρου δόξαν εἰς τὴν χριστιανισμὸν παρήγαγε, δύο φύσεις εἰπόν, ἀσάν τε καὶ ποιόν, ὡς ἐ Ἐμπεδοκλῇ, νεκρῶ ὀνομάζων τὴν ποιόν, φίλιαν δὲ, τὴν ἀγαθὴν. *Socratis Eccles. Hist.* lib. 1. cap. 27.

^m See Bayle's Dictionary under the Word *Manicheans*.

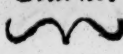
ⁿ *Ibid.* under the Word *Paulicians*.

^o *Ibid.* under the Word *Manicheans*.

^p *Ibid.* Remark D under the Word *Manicheans*: Pour rendre son Hypothese moins choquante, &c.

^q Bayle, *ibid.* L' homme est mechant & malheureux, &c.

and

and Beggars. Here we see the Ruins of a flourishing City, in another Place the Clarke. Ruins are hardly to be found: 

Jam seges est ubi Troja fuit, refecandaque falce;
Luxuriat Phrygio sanguine pinguis humus.^r

“ Corn fit to reap, now grows where Troy once stood,
“ And the Land's fatten'd with the Phrygian Blood.

Read the following excellent Words taken out of a Letter written to Cicero. “ Ex
“ Asia rediens, cum ab Ægina Megaram versus navigarem, cœpi regiones circum
“ circa prospicere: post me erat Ægina, ante Megara, dextra Piræus, sinistra Co-
“ rinthus; quæ oppida, quodam tempore florentissima fuerunt, nunc prostrata &
“ diruta ante oculos jacent. Sulpicius ad Ciceronem. “ In my Return from Asia,
“ as I sailed from Ægina to Megara, I began to take a View of the Countries
“ round about me: behind me was Ægina, before me was Megara, on my right
“ hand was the Port of Athens, and on my left hand was Corinth. These were
“ once the most flourishing Cities of Greece, but now they look only like Ruin and
“ Desolation.” Men of Learning, without going out of their Studies, are the
proper Persons to acquire the clearest Knowledge hereof, because in reading Hi-
story they have a full View of all Ages and all Places in the World. And History,
properly speaking, is little else but an Account of the Crimes and Misfortunes of
Mankind. On the other hand it is observed, that these two Evils, the one moral,
and the other natural, do not take up the whole of History; there are every where
some Things that are naturally and morally good, some Examples of Virtue and
Happiness: And this makes the Difficulty, Were there none but evil and un-
happy Men, there would be no need of an Hypothesis of two Principles: It is the
Mixture of Happiness and Virtue with Misery and Vice, that makes it requisite.
Here he lays the Stress of the whole Matter: ‘ Whence is it that Man is subject to
Pain and Misery, if Man be the Workmanship of one only Being, sovereignly good,
holy, and powerful? Can he be exposed to Diseases, Heat and Cold, Hunger and
Thirst, Pain and Grief? Can he have so many evil Inclinations? Can he com-
mit so many Crimes? Can Sovereign Holiness produce a criminal Creature? Can
Sovereign Goodness produce an unhappy Creature? Would not Sovereign Power,
joined with Infinite Goodness, furnish his own Workmanship plentifully with good
Things, and secure it from every Thing that might be offensive and vexatious?
And again a little farther: ‘ If Man were the Workmanship of a Principle infinitely
good and holy, he should not only have been created without any actual Evil, but
also without any Inclination to Evil, since that Inclination is such a Defect as
could not have such a Principle for its Cause. Thus we find him stating the
Case, and affirming concerning it, that there is no possible Way of solving these
Appearances, but by having recourse to two necessary, independent, eternal Prin-
ciples, directly opposite to each other, “ who at first put a continual Stop to each
other's Designs; but at last being weary of this Confusion, they came to an Agree-
ment; each of them yielded something, each of them had a Share in the Production
of Man, and in the Laws of the Union of the Soul: the good Principle obtained
those which procure to Man a thousand Pleasures, and consented to those which ex-
pose him to a thousand Sorrows; and if it consented that Moral Good should be in-
finitely less in Mankind than moral Evil, it repaired the Damage in some other
Kind of Creatures, wherein Vice should be much less than Virtue. If many
Men in this Life have more Misery than Happiness, this is recompensed in an-
other State; what they have not in a Human Shape, they shall recover under
another.

THUS we see prophane and atheistical Men in every Age employing all their Wit and Invention, to find out Hypotheses, in order to subvert all Religion, and

*This Notion
destructive
of all Reli-
gion.*

^r Ovid. Epist. Pen. ad Ulyss.

^f Si l'homme est l'ouvrage d'un seul principe souverainement bon, &c. Bayle *ibid.*

^t Que si l'homme étoit l'ouvrage d'un principe infiniment bon & saint, il auroit été créé, &c.

^u Les deux principes las du chaos, &c. Bayle *ibid.*

Clarke. to encourage Men to go on in the Practice of Iniquity. For to this End all their Discourses manifestly tend; either to destroy the very Existence of God, to deny his Providence and Government over the World, or to introduce a Plurality of Gods, whereby all religious Worship is confounded; or else to make God the Author and immediate Cause of all Evil and Wickedness, and consequently Men to be mere Machines, not acting of themselves, but only being acted upon, so that they cannot be accountable for what they do or leave undone: Which destroys the essential and eternal Difference of Good and Evil, Virtue and Vice, and takes away the Foundation of all Rewards and Punishments. *These*, I say, are unavoidable Consequences of such Hypotheses, and they are such as the Authors themselves saw, and were not ashamed to own. Thus the forecited Person affirms, *that "we have no distinct Idea that can make us understand that a Being (such as Man is) which does not exist of itself, can nevertheless act of itself. Zoroaster therefore will say, that the Free-will which was given to Man, is not able actually to determine itself, since it exists continually and totally by the Action of God.* What is this but to affirm that Man has no *Free-will*, is no *Agent* at all, but is wholly *passive*, and *acted upon* by the Supreme Being, who does every thing in him, and that therefore Man can no more properly be said to be at Liberty than a Watch or a Clock? In this manner do ingenious Men make *Hypotheses*, in order to account for Difficulties; which instead of explaining those Difficulties, overthrow the most plain and certain Truths in the World. They take *Principles* for granted, which neither themselves can prove, nor ought others to allow; and then draw such Conclusions from them, as contradict every one's own Experience. In Enquiries of this Nature, we ought to consider:

The Dignity and Weight of this Subject.

First, The Dignity and Weight of the Subject; what Kind of Arguments and Proofs may be expected, and the Manner in which it ought to be treated. Men's Reason and Understanding were given them on purpose that they might use them in the Search after Truth; and the whole Creation is a proper Object for them to exercise those Powers and Faculties upon, because it is the Effect of the most perfect Intelligence; and consequently, the Laws and Rules which it is subject to, the Variety of Means subservient to as great a Variety of Ends, and the numberless Causes, productive of numberless Effects, are as obvious to the Notice of Intelligent Beings, and at the same time manifest the Wisdom and Skill of their Author; as Light is fitted to the Eye or Sound to the Ear, each of which are most exactly calculated to those respective Organs. But that which relates more immediately to the Happiness of Mankind, which teaches him what Sort of a Creature he is, wherein his greatest Perfection consists, what his proper Business and Employment ought to be, and what his final Hopes and Expectations; this should be their *principal* Enquiry, and they should endeavour to gain the greatest Satisfaction in it. The Question now before us takes in all these Particulars, and is of the highest Importance and Concern; for if we conceive ourselves to be in a *natural* and *moral* State of *Evil*, and know not what to ascribe it to, neither how we came into it, nor which way to escape out of it, we shall be very much perplexed and confounded. Hence have arisen the extravagant Opinions of *Fate*, as if every Thing existed necessarily in the Manner it does, through an eternal Succession of Ages, without any Cause or Reason: And of *Chance*, as if the whole System of the Universe fell into that Order in which we now see it, by a fortuitous Concourse of Atoms: With numberless other incoherent Notions. Hence also have arisen the grossest Superstition, and most absurd Worship of dead Heroes and Kings, and of mere Names and Modes, or partial Considerations of the Deity, which have been appointed by Tyrannical Governours, to keep the Ignorant in awe, and to serve Worldly Purposes. And from hence Men have been led into all Kinds of Wickedness and Immorality, having no Sense of the Authority of a Deity, no Remorse of Conscience, nor any other Obligation to the Practice of Virtue and Honesty. As therefore we have any Regard for the Honour of God, that, as Saint Paul says, he *may be justified in his (Works, as well as) Sayings*,

Rom. iii.
4.

^w Nous n'avons aucune Idée distincte qui puisse nous faire comprendre, &c. Bayle *ibid.*

and may overcome when he is judged; As we have any Esteem for Virtue and Truth, which are eternal and immutable, and which are founded in the Nature and Reason of Things; And as we have any Value for our own selves, and any Regard to that Happiness we are capable of enjoying: We ought diligently to search into the Cause and Foundation of all the Evils incident to Mankind, that we may be able to form a true Judgment of them, that we may know what a Hand we have in bringing them upon ourselves, and consequently how we ought to act under them.

Secondly, In such Enquiry, we ought to consider what Kind of Arguments or Proofs are to be expected: For these are always proportioned to the Nature of the Subject: In some Things they are Demonstrations, and in others they are only greater or less Degrees of Probability. Of Demonstrations there are two Sorts; Demonstrations *à priori*, when we argue from the Cause to the Effect; and Demonstrations *à posteriori*, when we argue from the Effect to the Cause. Thus when we argue from the Ideas we have of Immensity, Eternity, necessary Existence, and the like, that such Perfections can reside but in one Being, and thence conclude that there can be but one Supreme God, who is the Cause and Author of all Things, and that therefore it is contradictory to this to suppose that there can be two necessary independent Principles, the one the Cause of all the Good, and the other the Cause of all the Evil that is in the World; this is an Argument *à priori*. Again, when the Manichæans and Paulicians, from what they observe in Things and Facts, from the many natural Evils which they see in the World, and the many moral Wickednesses which are committed by Men, conclude, that there must be two different Causes or Principles from whence each of these proceed; this is arguing *à posteriori*. According to the former Way of Reasoning, the forementioned Author allows the Defenders of the one Principle of all Things, to have the Advantage, and **that nothing can be more absurd, if we consult our own most clear and distinct Ideas, than the Hypothesis of two eternal Principles, independent on one another, whereof one has no Goodness, and puts a Stop to the Designs of the other.* But this seems to be said, because he thinks such Ideas are only mere Imaginations of the Mind, and have nothing without to answer them; and that therefore the certainest Way, is to argue *à posteriori*, by explaining the Phænomena, and giving an Account of the Matters of Fact; which he affirms the admitting of two Principles does, and therefore *† he has hit the Mark, and his Method of arguing exceeds the other, notwithstanding the Beauty of Ideas and Reasons.* Yet the Ideas of Necessity, Unity, Immensity, and the like, are as clear and distinct, and the Existence of a Being to whom they belong, does as unavoidably follow, and we are as certain of it, as of our own Existence, and of any Thing without us, answering to those Impressions we feel within us; and as we are of those Facts which he calls Phænomena. So that the Reasoning *à priori*, is in itself as strong and conclusive, as that *à posteriori*; and they have a strict Connection with each other: For by the Observation of the Facts, we get an Idea of the Cause; and from the Nature of the Cause, we judge concerning the Facts.

Lastly, The Manner of treating this Subject, ought to be such as the Dignity of it requires. Wisdom, as our Saviour says, *will be justified of her Children.* Such Persons only who have a Love and Concern for Truth, and are diligent and earnest in the Pursuit of it, are able to find it out, and to vindicate it, in the same manner, as those Persons who have a Taste or Relish for any common Arts or Sciences, as Architecture or Musick, have the most exact Knowledge of the Grounds and Principles of them, and make the greatest Improvement in them. Prejudice and Passion blind the Understanding, and vicious and corrupt Habits disable the Powers and Faculties of the Mind; so that it can no more judge of Truth than a vitiated Eye can judge of Colours, or than Colours can be distinguished through a false Medium. Truth is unalterable, and the Ways of finding it out certain; it is not to be made and unmade at Pleasure, or diversified according

^{*} Ainsi en consultant ces idées, on ne trouve rien de plus absurde que l'Hypothèse des deux principes éternels, & indépendans l'un de l'autre, dont l'un n'ait aucune bonté, & puisse arrêter les desseins de l'autre. Bayle *ibid.*
[†] Je regagne donc l'avantage. Vous me surpassez dans la beauté des Idées, &c. Bayle *ibid.*

Clarke. to the various Humours and Fancies of Men; it is universal, and all of a Piece, the same yesterday, to day, and for ever, like the great Author of it, in whose Nature and Perfections it is founded. It is therefore our Part to enquire into the Truth and Reason of Things, with Sincerity and Integrity; to lay the Foundation in what we are sure cannot deceive us; in the essential Difference betwixt Virtue and Vice, Right and Wrong, Good and Evil; in which we can no more be imposed upon, than Light can be made appear to us as Darkness, or Bitter and Sweet have the same Taste. And whatsoever we build upon this Foundation, will be as firm and unshaken by all the Attacks of vicious and prophane Men, as a House built upon a Rock is by Storms and Tempests.

*Mistakes
owing to
the not ob-
serving
these Rules.*

HAD these Rules been observed, there would have been no occasion for inventing absurd Hypotheses to explain any of the Phænomena of Nature. As *Truth* may be left to the strictest and most impartial Enquiry, without any Danger of its being or appearing like *Falshood*, so the System of the World may be very safely committed to the closest and most curious Examination of the nicest Enquirer, assisted by all the Helps of Art and Nature, without fearing that any Part of it should be below the Workmanship of its Creator, or cast any unworthy Reflection upon him. *Error* and *Irregularity* only, are ashamed to appear in the Light, and must be supported by Art and Human Contrivances. *Here* there is many times need of Darkness, or of a false Light; *these* must be supported by Power or Interest, and the like, to gain them Reputation: But the Works of the Creation, want no such mean Artifices to recommend them to the Esteem and Admiration of all that behold them. Nothing more is required, but to judge of them by the unerring Rules of Reason and Knowledge; and the nearer they are viewed, the more exactly they are compared together, so much the more beautiful do they appear, and more nicely adjusted to each other, in order to produce their respective Ends. In any other Method than this, they may seem disordered and confused; In the same manner as in Human Arts and Sciences; to a Person who has no Skill in Building, who understands not the Rules of Architecture, the most regular and well contrived Edifice may seem disproportionate, and without any Beauty; And by that Ear which has no Relish of Musick, the most perfect Concord and Harmony may not be distinguished. There are therefore some first and general Principles, in every Art and Science, which it is necessary for those to understand, who would improve themselves in the Knowledge of them, or who would judge of the Skill of others; and if they are mistaken in *these*, or if they apply the Rules of one Science to another, to which they do not belong, the Faults they unjustly cast upon it, will return upon themselves. Thus likewise there are general *Laws*, by which the System of the World is governed, which it is necessary for every one to understand, who would judge of the Order and Regularity of it; and from Men's Ignorance in, or Misapplication of *these*, have arisen all those Objections which they themselves have thought so strong, and which they have endeavoured to answer in a different Way.

*The Weak-
ness of the
Epicurean
Arguments.*

THIS was the Case of the *Epicureans*, as is manifest by the Instances they gave. Their principal Objection of the Obliquity of the *Ecliptick* to the *Equator*, whereby the *Torrid Zone* is rendered too hot, and the *Frigid Zone* too cold for Men to inhabit; was owing to their Ignorance of those Places and their Inhabitants. Modern Discoveries in Geography fully answer this Objection, by shewing the Facts to be false. The Heat is not so excessive, even under the *Line*, but it can be very well born; nay, it is so tempered with continual Wind and Rain, as render it very agreeable: Besides, by the Sun's Motion in the *Ecliptick* (the very small Parts of whose Periphery considered as Streight Lines, make a greater Angle with the Plane of the *Equator*, the nearer they are taken to the Equinoctial Points) his Departure from the *Equator* is then so quick, compared with what it is in the *Tropicks*, that it is not full Two Months in moving *Twenty*, of the *Seven and Forty*, Degrees of Declination; so that it is but a very little while vertical; and, which still diminishes its Heat, 'tis never more than Twelve Hours above the Horizon: And we have Instances of Persons who have lived to as great an Age, as Men in cooler *Climates*. So likewise the greater Part of the *Frigid Zone* is found

to be habitable by *Men*, and the Produce of those Places furnishes both *them* and *Clarke*, the Animals there, with Fences against the Extremity of the Cold. And if the *Epicureans* had considered the Effects of the Position of these two Circles in any other Obliquity, they would have found much greater Inconveniences arising from the more unequal Distribution of Light and Darkness, Heat and Cold, which in the present Situation are most conveniently distributed upon the whole. Had the Obliquity been much *more* than it is now, the Torrid Zone would have increased proportionably; and then the Heat and Drought might not have been so well adapted to such sort of Plants and Animals as are now under the *Line*; and whilst the Sun approached one *Pole*, those Parts towards the other *Pole* would have been left in much greater Darkness, and longer Cold than now: And had the Obliquity been much less, the Heat would have been too near an Equality, so as to have destroyed the agreeable Seasons of Spring and Summer, Autumn and Winter. If therefore we take in the whole Globe of Earth, and consider it in its present State, we shall find that the Light and Heat is the most agreeably dispensed that it could be, for such sort of Plants, and Fruits, and Animals, as now the several Parts of it are furnished with: and to suppose any great Alteration in the respect now mentioned, would be to suppose it refitted for some other kinds of Food and Inhabitants. The Instances of the Usefulness of a great Part of the Earth, as *Seas*, *Rocks*, *Heaths*, and the like, are all such as shew only the Ignorance of the Objectors in those Matters: as is plain by the late Discoveries in Navigation and Philosophy, and shall be particularly made appear in its proper Place. At present this is sufficient to shew how weakly they argued against the Maker and Governour of the World; by first supposing those Things to be *evil* or *useless*, which are of the greatest Benefit to Mankind in many respects, which they were wholly ignorant of, and then unjustly inferring from thence, that they could not be created by a wise and good Being. The very Foundation of their Argument is false, and therefore what they conclude from it must necessarily be so too: 'Till Men know the Nature of the Thing, the several Ways it may be applied, and all the Ends and Purposes it may serve, it is unreasonable to pronounce concerning it, whether it be *good* or *evil*; and it is much more unreasonable after a groundless Determination to reflect on the Author of it. Upon a nicer Enquiry such Suppositions are always found to be false, and the Reflections turn to the Shame and Confusion of those who make them.

THUS it is with the *Epicurean* Atheists of old; and thus it is likewise with those who in later Ages have followed their Example. It is reported of a certain King, who from his great Skill in Astronomy was styled the *Wise* and the *Astrologer*; that he should prophanelly say, *If he had been with the Creator when he made the World, he could have taught him how to have made it better.* This Saying of his, was wholly owing to his Ignorance of the *true* System of the World; and has been fully answered since, even to a Demonstration. The *apparent* Motions and Bignesses of the Planets, are very different from the true ones. Upon the former, the ancient Astronomers built their Systems, which are so perplexed and confused, that they are scarce intelligible. They observed the Planets to be sometimes nearer, and sometimes farther off; to have different *Phases*; to be sometimes *progressive*, sometimes *stationary*, and sometimes *retrograde*. To solve these, and such like Appearances, they invented various Hypotheses: According to *some*, the Earth was the Center; and the Sun and Planets, together with all the fixed Stars, revolved about it every Day: and *others* would have *some* of the Planets move about the Sun, which should carry them along with it about the Earth. To account for all these *seeming* Irregularities, they were forced to have recourse to *Excentrics*, *Epicycles*, and *Epicycles* upon *Epicycles*, and the like; and with regard to *these* it was, without all doubt, that the forementioned Astronomer spake: and had *these* been the true System of the World, it would have been extremely difficult to have shewn the Wisdom or Contrivance of it; for according to *them*, there is no *Proportion* observed, no *Adjustment* of the Magnitude and Distance of the respective Bodies, nor any regular *Curves* in which they are moved; but the great

The Weakness of the modern Objections.

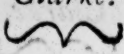
* Alphonsus X. King of Leon and Castile.

Clarke. Bodies move about the lesser ones with the same Indifference, as *these* would do about *them*. But this is so far from being the Truth, that, as the Prophet eloquently expresses it, *God hath measured the Waters in the Hollow of his Hand, and hath meted out Heaven with a Span, and comprehended the Dust of the Earth in a Measure, and weighed the Mountains in Scales, and the Hills in a Balance.* The Distances of all the heavenly Bodies from their *respective* Centers of Gravity, about which any particular Number of them move, and from the common Center of Gravity of them all, are most exactly in *reciprocal* Proportion to the *Quantity* of Matter contained in each of them; whence they are in perfect *Equilibrium*; and consequently by the mere Continuance of the general Laws of Nature, when once put in Motion, they will revolve in regular Figures about their common Center of Gravity and about each other. From hence arise their different Appearances and *seeming* Irregularities; when at the same time they really go on uniformly in their stated Course. Thus, when any Planet *seems* to be *stationary* or *retrograde*, it does in *reality* proceed on in its Orbit; and it is owing to our Position only, that it appears otherwise; as shall be fully explained when we come to consider the *real* Motions of them, and the *Laws* by which they are governed. There was therefore no need of those forementioned Inventions, to explain the Phænomena of Nature. And those Persons who complained of the *Laws* of the Creation, complained only of *Laws* of their own making, which are no where to be found in Nature; and the Absurdity of which, they must answer for themselves.

With respect to the moral World. AND the same will be found to be true likewise of the moral World, the several Parts of which are as exactly adjusted and proportioned to each other as those of the natural World. *Truth* is as agreeable to the Understanding, as *Light* is to the Eye; and *Virtue* is as beautiful and engaging to the Mind, as any *material* Object is to the Sight. And every *Sense* belonging to the *Body*, has also its proper *Object*, which is duly calculated to it; and in a right Application of which, consists its greatest Enjoyment. If therefore we diligently examine into the Nature of the *Mind* and of the *Body*, and consider the several Faculties and Powers of each of them; their Dispositions and Inclinations; what the proper Objects of them are; in what Manner they are to be applied; and what is the Rule and Measure of Action; we shall find *this* also is a very regular and well contrived System, and that there is no more need of the Hypotheses and Fictions of learned Men to account for the *Irregularities* and *moral Evils* of Mankind, than there was of *Excentrics* and *Epicycles*, to explain the *Motions* of the heavenly Bodies. Such Hypotheses for the most part dishonour the Creation; but a strict Enquiry into the *Laws* of it, always shews the Wisdom of the Creator more and more. We need not therefore to fear, but in this respect also God will justify himself, and that the Wickedness which is committed amongst Men, can be no way charged upon Him. And thus the Prophet *Isaiab* affirms, in opposition to such Hypotheses, that God alone is the *Original* and *Author* of all Things, and that He will vindicate himself in the Creation and Government of them; Chap. xlv. § 7. *I form the Light, and create Darkneſs, I make Peace and create Evil, I the Lord do all theſe Things.* And Prov. xvi. § 4. *The Lord hath made all Things for himſelf, (or as it should have been rendered, hath suited Things to each other,) yea even the Wicked for the Day of Evil:* that is, God hath made all Things *corresponding* to one another, hath exactly fitted and proportioned them to their respective Ends and Purposes, yea even the Punishment of evil Men, according to their Deserts.

The Weakness of the Hypothesis of two Original Principles. BUT before I come to explain this in Particulars, it will be necessary to consider That ancient Hypothesis lately revived, of two *Original* Principles; the one the Author of all *Evil*, and the other the Author of all *Good*; and to shew that notwithstanding the boasted Excellency of it, it is a very absurd and contradictory Supposition; such as cannot exist in Nature, and will by no means solve the present Phænomena. And this I shall do by examining,

First, What sort of an *Idea* That is, of an infinite, independent, necessary evil Being. And then, *Secondly*, I shall make it appear, that the very Supposition of the Existence of such a Being, is an express and direct Contradiction to the Existence of an infinite, independent, necessary Good Being: And that therefore we are

as certain that this is not a true Account of the Original of Things, as we are of the common Principles of all Knowledge: And that not^a to allow of arguing thus, from the most simple and clear Ideas of our Minds, is to deny the eternal and necessary Relations of Things, even the same in effect, as to say there is no Difference betwixt a Square and a Circle, betwixt twice two and seven. Clarke. 

If an *Evil Principle* be allowed at all, it must exist of itself absolutely independent of the *good Principle*; because it is supposed that they are equal, and share alike in the Government of the World; and because, if the *one* were superior to the *other*, it would certainly prevail, and not suffer *That other* to act in direct Opposition to it. Wherefore the Defenders of this Scheme, are so far consistent with themselves, as to assert, that the *evil Principle* is infinite and independent, and in every thing opposes the Designs of the *good Principle*: But they do not define their Terms, nor tell us what sort of an Idea that of *infinite Evil* is, nor how it can be applied to such a Being. All *Evil* supposes *Understanding*, and *Power* and *Liberty* of acting; because it is the Consequence or Effect, either of the *Neglect* or *Abuse* of one or more of *these*: For in the *Imperfection* or *Want* of them, it cannot be supposed by these Men to consist; because an *Understanding* infinitely *imperfect*, or an *infinite Want* of *Understanding*, is no *Understanding* at all. And the same may be affirmed of *Power* and *Liberty* and the like. Their first Principle therefore must be endued with infinite *Knowledge* and *Power*, and with perfect *Liberty* of acting; and how does this agree to the Notion any one has of an infinite *evil Being*? Can *Knowledge* and *Power* and *Liberty* in any Propriety of Speech be called *Evil*, much less the highest Degree and most universal Extent of them? With respect to these therefore absolutely considered, such a Being cannot be styled *Evil*, because He is endued with such Powers and Faculties as are not *evil* in themselves. It remains therefore, that the *Evil* must consist in the *Abuse* or *Misapplication* of these Powers and Faculties; either in not *knowing* what is fittest and best to be done; or else in not being *able* to do that which Wisdom directs; or else in having some *Temptation* or *Interest* to the contrary: For these are the only Causes of any Being's acting contrary to what is just and right. Let us try to apply these to the supposed infinitely *evil Principle*, and see how well they will agree with it. Can we imagine that infinite *Knowledge* can be imposed upon or deceived? That it should not be intimately acquainted with the Nature and Reason of Things, their essential Differences, what the Consequences and Effects of the diverse Application of them will be, what they are in different Circumstances capable of, and what are the proper Means to obtain the respective Ends? So that in this Particular there is no room for *Evil*: For *Knowledge* and *Wisdom* are the most perfect and compleat in such a Being. If to *this* we add infinite *Power*; the Object of which is, every thing that is possible to be done, and which cannot be resisted nor controuled by any Force whatsoever; it cannot be, but that the Being in whom *these* reside, must exercise this *Power* according to the unerring Rules of that perfect *Knowledge* He is endued with. The Absurdity of two Original independent Principles.

AGAIN, with regard to *Liberty*, there can be nothing from *within* or from *without*, to induce such a Being to act contrary to Goodness and Truth; no *evil* Disposition or Inclination; because the necessary Result of his own Perfections, is infinite Happiness to himself, a perfect *Rectitude* of Will, and consequently no Motive, either to make any Creatures that are *evil*, or to commit any *Evil* towards them; neither can he have any *Temptation* from other Beings to do *Evil*, because all such *Temptations* manifestly arise from *Weakness* or *Depravation*, which are contradictory to All-sufficiency.

WHETHER therefore we consider the *first Principle* with regard to its *natural* or *moral* Powers, the Absurdity of its being infinitely *Evil* evidently appears: It is at first sight a confused Jumble of Ideas, an absurd Mixture of Perfections and Imperfections, of Powers and Wants, of Excellencies and Depravations, all in one Subject; and which, considered singly, are absolutely inconsistent with and contradictory to each other.

^a As Mr. Bayle does in the forecited Place, in these Words: Les Idées les plus sûres et les plus claires de l'ordre, nous apprenent, &c. Manicheens, Remark D.

BUT

Clarke. BUT that which shows the Absurdity of this Hypothesis still further, is the utter Impossibility of conceiving two necessary Independent Beings at all; it is an express Contradiction in the very Terms, and the Ideas destroy each other. The Idea which every one has of *Necessity* is a plain, simple, uniform Idea, which supposes Unity, Immensity, Eternity, and the like: and if we attempt any Way to diversify it, to make any Change or Alteration in it, if we try to multiply it or to confine it to any particular Time or Place, it immediately vanishes. Thus for Instance, to suppose *two* necessary independent Beings, is to suppose *neither* of them to be necessary; because *either* of them being absolutely independent on the other, might have existed without that other, and consequently we can conceive *either* of them to be absent, which is directly contrary to the first Supposition of its being necessarily existing. So also with regard to the essential Properties of such a Being, for Instance *Immensity*; the necessary existing Being must be *every where*; and the very supposing him to be absent from any one Place, destroys his necessarily existing at all: For if we can conceive Him not to be, in any *particular* Place; we can as well conceive Him not to be in any *other* particular Place, or in *any* Place at all. And the same holds true with respect to *Duration*: Whatever can be supposed not to exist at any *one* Time, may as well be supposed not to exist at any *other* Time; and by the same Reason not to exist *at all*, which is a flat Contradiction to the Idea of necessary Existence. There can therefore be but one first *Principle*, the *Original* and *Cause* of all Things that are, a Self-existent Being, who is eternal, immense, all-wise and all-powerful, infinitely good and happy: As has been at large, and in every Particular, demonstrated by *others* in the Course of these Lectures.

The Difficulty of judging of the Goodness of the System of the World.

THE whole System of the World, was at first created, and is still governed by this Being, who is every where present, sees the Nature and Essence of all Things, knows their Powers and Faculties, and what Ends and Purposes they will best serve. So that if we would judge aright concerning any Part of the Creation, we ought to do it by such Rules as are consistent with the known and certain Perfections of the Deity: and since it is demonstrable that it is the Effect of Wisdom and Goodness, we should endeavour to reconcile it to them. Thus in the present Enquiry concerning the Original of *Evil*, we ought first to consider *what* it is we call *Evil*, which perhaps may be very *improperly* so called; Whether it does not arise from the Imperfection of our own Understandings, who presume to condemn what we have not a perfect Knowledge of. In the ordinary Works of human Art and Contrivance, we see how difficult it is to account for any particular Part in most of them, without knowing the whole Composition: As in a Clock or a Watch; He who should go about to condemn the Shape or Use of any particular Wheel, the Situation or Design of which was not at all understood by Him; it would but discover his own Ignorance, and not at all reflect upon the Workman. We need not therefore be surprised, if in our Survey of the Universe, we be often at a loss how to account for many Things that we observe there. Many Parts of it are wholly out of our Reach; as may justly be inferred from the Multitude of fixed Stars perpetually discovered by Telescopes, as they are improved in Goodness. Other Parts we know very little more of than their bare Existence; as, of the Nearness of those Stars, that they are fixed and luminous Bodies. Other Parts, as they approach nearer to us, we know something more of; and by Observation and Analogy, judge them to be of the same Species with this Earth which we inhabit: Such are the *Planets*: But amongst these is a very numerous System of *Comets*, the Nature and Use of which we are in a great measure ignorant of. And of those Parts which are nearest of all to us, even our own Globe, how little is it that we know of it? We live upon the Superficies, and cannot tell what is contained within the Bowels of it, for many thousand Miles: Nay even upon this Superficies, there are whole Species of Creatures, which it will be difficult to us to determine what Purposes they serve. And we find by the Improvements of Microscopes, that Nature knows no End in *Smallness* as well as in *Greatness*, from the Multitude of minute Animals which every where appear. To be able therefore to pronounce peremptorily concerning such a System as this, requires to be every where present in it, to be able to

to understand and connect every Part of it, and to see the *Fitness* and *Adjustment* Clarke.
of the whole to some general good End or Purpose: Which the wisest and most
sagacious of Men are so far from being able to do, that we can scarce conceive it
of any created Being of the highest Rank or Station. *Known unto God alone seem* Acts xv.
all his Works, in This Sense, to be *from the Beginning of the World* to the End 18.
thereof. But though we cannot understand the whole of the Creation of God,
yet this does not hinder but we may understand a great deal of it; enough to serve
all the Purposes of this present Life; enough for us to judge in general of the
Power and Wisdom and Goodness of the Maker and Governour of it; and what
our Demeanour towards Him and towards one another ought to be. By that little
which we do know, we ought to determine concerning other Things which we
are not so certain of, and have not the Means of being acquainted with, that as
they are all the Effects of the same infinite Power and Wisdom, the same Skill
and Contrivance must go through the whole, according to the Degree and Propor-
tion of the several Parts; and not immediately to condemn them as *useless* or *evil*,
because we are ignorant of the *Good* or *Service* that they do. This is the Method
we take in judging of human Arts and Compositions; and so ought we to do in
the Works of Nature. Upon the first Examination of the Structure of the Bodies
of Men and Animals, there were many Parts, which to the Curious appeared *in-*
convenient or *useless*; but afterwards upon stricter Enquiry, or upon depriving them
of those Parts, they were found to be of great Service: and continual Improve-
ments of the same Kind have demonstrated the Animal Body to be so far from
being *ill* contrived, that it is the most surprisingly curious, and most exactly con-
trived for all the Purposes of this present Life.

In the same Method ought we to proceed, in forming our Judgment concern- The true
Method of
judging of
the Good-
ness of the
System of
the World.
ing all other Parts of the Creation: They appear at first sight to be *good* and *use-*
ful in some respects; and in those respects wherein they appear otherwise, we
should suspend our Thoughts 'till we have searched more narrowly into them.
There is room for perpetual Study, and new Scenes of Knowledge continually
open to us. If therefore we would acquit ourselves as sincere and impartial En-
quirers after Truth, and expect to find any Satisfaction in what we do; we must
be content with that Measure of Understanding which God has given us, and ap-
ply it in such a Manner as He intended; and not blame either *it* or the *Objects*
of it, any more than we do our Eyes, because we cannot distinctly see what is in
every one of the Planets; or than we do those Planets, because they are so far re-
moved from us.

THIS Method we naturally proceed in, with respect to the common Arts and
Sciences amongst Men. We judge of the Knowledge and Skill of the Workman
by his Performances; or by what we experience of his Skill, we judge what is
likely to be the Effect of it: and *these* mutually assist each other. So likewise in
the System of the World, or the whole Frame of Nature; we know that a Being
infinitely wise, all-powerful and good, cannot be the Author of any Thing, but
what is worthy of those Perfections to create: And consequently, since every Thing
that *is*, was made by Him, it must originally and as He made it, be *very good*;
that is, fit for that End and Purpose for which it was designed. Again, on the
other Hand; from observing the *Goodness* and *Excellency* of *some* Parts of the Cre-
ation, which are so obvious that we cannot help seeing them, we come to form a
general Judgment of the *Wisdom* and *Goodness* of the Creator in *other* Things, the
immediate Use or Benefit of which to the whole, is not so manifest. Each of *these*,
are assisting to the *other*, and will at last prove coincident. It is therefore a very
good Argument *à priori*, the Force of which no Fatalist can avoid; That *as* sure
as we are of infinite Intelligence, Power and Goodness, and that the Universe could
not be the Effect of mere Chance or Necessity, (all which have been fully and
clearly demonstrated by Others in the Course of these Lectures,) *so* sure are we,
that every Thing created by such a Being, must be worthy of those Perfections;
and that all Arguments to the contrary, drawn from the seeming *Evil* or *Irregu-*
larity of some Parts, considered singly or with some private View, are only Argu-
ments *ad Ignorantiam*. This may be a general Satisfaction; and we must in many

Clarke. Things be forced to acquiesce in it, unless we could hope to have Understanding enough to comprehend at once all the Parts of the Universe, and see the *End* for which they were intended, and the exact *Subserviency* of every one of them to it.

This Difficulty no Reason why we should not particularly enquire into the Nature of it.

Now this hinders not, but that under this general Apprehension, we may with Modesty and a good Intention, enquire into the Works of the Creation, and thoroughly examine and consider those Parts of it especially, which seem to cast a Shadow upon the Lustre of the whole, and to eclipse the Beauty of it: And by so doing we shall find, that such Enquiries will either vindicate the Laws of the Creation, or else convince us, that the Defect lyes in the Shallowness of our Understandings, and not in the Nature or Constitution of the Things themselves. Wherefore before we can pronounce concerning any Thing, that it is really *Evil*, we ought to consider what it is we mean by *Evil*, and wherein it consists.

What is meant by Evil.

Evil is a relative Term, and either regards the *Being itself*, which is so styled, or it refers to some *other Beings*, with whom it is connected, or else it respects the *Author* by whom it is made. With regard to the Being itself, and the several Faculties or Powers with which it is endued, ^bthere is a private *Use* or *Good*, some *End* or *Aim* to be served by it; for which it is naturally and originally constituted; towards which, it regularly moves; and to promote which, its *Powers* or *Faculties* most easily tend. If there be any thing in such a Being, which is not conducive to this *End*, but, on the contrary, hinders the attaining of it; that is, if the Constitution of it be disturbed, or the Powers and Faculties of it not permitted to exert themselves and produce their genuine Effects; such a Being is so far *ill* to Itself, is in an unnatural, and, if it be an intelligent Being, in an uneasy State. And because there is no such Thing as any finite Being existing *alone* and *independent* of all others; but there is a Connection and Relation which they have to each other; whereby a *System* is composed, which has a general *End* or *Good*, to which every one of the Parts has a natural Tendency, in its proper Place: Whatever Being disturbs the Order and Harmony of such a System, That Being is *evil* with respect to *others*, is ill affected and injurious to them. With regard to the *Author* and Contriver of such a System, it cannot be styled *evil* in any other Sense, than as it is unworthy of such an Author, below the Wisdom and Goodness of such a Being to create it: For the *System* is supposed to be as compleat as in the Nature of Things it can be, and to have no reference to any Thing else; and there is really no such Thing as *Evil* at all, *abstractly* considered, but only *comparatively*; that is, they are more or less perfect or excellent, when compared with each other.

HAVING thus determined what is meant by *Evil*; all the *Evils* that are, may be distinguished into these three Sorts:

First, All *Wants* and *Imperfections* in ourselves, or the Things about us, the either not having, or not having to that Degree which other Beings have, certain Powers, Faculties, and Excellencies; or else the *Weakness* of those Laws by which the material World is at present governed, compared with more *perfect* ones of which it is capable.

Secondly, All *natural Evils*, such as *Diseases*, *Pain*, *Death*, and the like; which Men and all other Creatures here are incident to; And all kind of Disorders and Irregularities in the Things without us, as Storms, Tempests, Earthquakes, &c. And,

Thirdly, *Moral Evils*, or all those *Sins* and *Vices* which we see committed by Men every Day, and which render them so corrupt and miserable.

THESE Particulars take in the whole of what can in any Sense be called *Evil*; and comprehend all the *Objections* that have been at any Time made against the Constitution and Government of the World.

Of the Evil of Imperfection.

First, I shall consider those *Wants* and *Imperfections*, which we experience within Ourselves, compared with other Beings of superior Rank, who either have *Powers* and *Faculties* which we have not; or else have those that are in common with us, to a much greater Degree and Perfection: And also the *Weakness* of those Laws, by which the *material World* is at present governed, compared with more

^b Πᾶσα τέχνη καὶ πᾶσα μέθοδος, ὁμοίως ἢ πρῶτος τε καὶ δεύτερος, ἀγαθὴ τινὶ ἐφ' ἧς δοκεῖ. *Aristot. Eth. in Principio.*

perfect

perfect ones which it is capable of. And I shall show that there is no just Ground *Clarke.*
of Complaint in these Respects.

BEFORE we can form any Judgment of the *Perfection* or *Imperfection* of any *What*
Part of the Creation, whether *animate* or *inanimate*; we must understand what *Knowledge*
Powers and Faculties it is endued with, what Laws it is subject to, and what is *is requisite*
the Effect of the right Use or Application of them; for without such Know- *to judge of*
ledge we can have no just Idea of the Being itself, of what Use it is in the World, *such Imper-*
nor wherein the *good* or *evil* of it consists. Thus for Instance, whoever would *fection.*
pretend to judge of the Excellency of the *Planetary System*, ought to have a par-
ticular Knowledge of the Constitution and Laws of it; the Bigness, Distance and
Situation of those Bodies, with respect to one another; the Laws of Motion, and
the Curves in which they are directed: From a due comparing of all which to-
gether, it will be manifest whether there be any Uniformity, Proportion, or Order,
observed amongst them or not. And the same holds true in any *One* of those Bo-
dies, suppose this Earth: We must be acquainted with its Distance from the Sun,
the Obliquity of its Axis to the Plain of the Ecliptick, the Properties of the an-
nual Orb in which it moves, and its Rotation about its own Axis, in order to see
the Contrivance of it, by which are produced the several Climates, and the Suc-
cession of Day and Night, Summer and Winter, Seed-time and Harvest. And so
likewise must we proceed in the Consideration of the particular Parts of it, as
the Mountains, Seas, Desarts, and the like, or of any of the Inhabitants of them.
Of these latter, *Man* is the principal: Who as He is composed of Soul and Body,
the *one* Immaterial, endued with *Thought, Reason, Liberty*, and the like; the *other*
Material, endued with different *Powers* and Organs of *Sense*; so it is absolutely
necessary to have a distinct Knowledge of the Nature and Extent of *these*, and
their mutual Influence on each other, before we can tell wherein the *Perfection* of
Man consists, or wherein he may be said to be *defective*.

It is therefore in these kind of Enquiries, as it is in *Mathematicks*. There are *The true*
two Ways of coming at the Truth, the one *Synthetick*, and the other *Analytick*. *Method of*
To this latter Method we owe all the Improvements that have been made in na- *such En-*
tural Philosophy of late Years, which will furnish us with Answers to every ma- *quiry.*
terial Objection that has been made against the System of the World. This *Ana-*
lytick Method consists in making a great Number of Experiments and Observa-
tions, sufficient to enable us to draw some *general* Conclusion from them. Thus
in the forementioned Instances, by a large Induction of Particulars we may pro-
ceed from *Compounds* to the simple Ingredients *of which they consist*; from con-
sidering the particular Motions, to the finding out the Forces that are necessary to
generate them; and in general, from Effects we may go to Causes; and the more
universal the Effects are, so much the more universal must the Cause be, till at last
it ends in the most general that can be. It is very true, that this is not a strict *De-*
monstration of the general Conclusion; because That can be had no other Way
than by trying all the Experiments that can possibly be made every where, which
is infinite and endless; but it is the best that the Nature of the Thing is capable
of, and ought to be satisfactory, if there be no one Instance found to the contrary.
Thus by continual Experience and Observation we find all the *Parts* of Matter we
are conversant with, to be *extended, moveable, and impenetrable*. And these being
obvious Properties, and no single Objection against them; we justly conclude that
this may be affirmed of all the *Parts* of which the whole Earth is composed,
though we have no Opportunity or Means of coming to the Places to make Expe-
riments in, as in the Bowels of the Earth, or the Depths of the Sea; and from
thence by *Analogy* conclude the same of the heavenly Bodies, and of all *Matter*
in general. And so likewise concerning any *particular Law* of Motion that Mat-
ter is subject to: There are numberless Experiments which convince us that Bo-
dies are *heavy*, or tend towards each other with a certain determinate Force. This
sufficiently appears from the different *Weight* of such Bodies: And there being no

^c Hac *Analysi* licebit, ex rebus compositis ratiocinatione colligere simplices; ex motibus, vires moventes; & in
universum, ex effectis causas; ex causisque particularibus generales; donec ad generalissimas tandem fit deventum.
Neut. Optices, Edit. 2. pag. 413.

Instance

Clarke. Instance to the contrary, in so often repeated Trials, we reasonably infer, that this is true in all other Places of the Earth as well as here. And because it is found to be in a certain *Proportion* to the *Distance* and *Quantity* of Matter, we apply it also to the heavenly Bodies, and lay it down as a *general Law*, that all Bodies whatsoever *gravitate* towards each other. This is the only Method we have of coming to the Knowledge of the general Nature and Constitution of Things, by Reasons *à posteriori*, and Observations of the Effects, in order to find out some simple and universal Causes or Laws; and then by Arguments *à priori*, or from such known and established Causes, to collect particular Effects, in such Cases where we have no Means or Opportunity of making the Experiments.

The Difference between this Method and that of the ancient Philosophers.

AND this is very different from the Method of the *Epicureans* and *Peripateticks*; the former of which endeavoured to explain the System of Nature, by *Hypotheses* which were only Fictions of their own Mind, and had no Foundation in the Nature of Things, nor were of any Use in, nor could they be proved by Experimental Philosophy; The latter attempted to solve the same Phenomena, by ascribing to every Species of Things, some *specifick* or *occult Qualities*, upon which the Actions of all Bodies depended, in a Manner wholly unknown to them. And if any one asked whence any particular Effects proceeded, as suppose, what is the Cause of *Gravitation* or *Electricity*; it was thought a sufficient Answer to say, that it arose from the Nature of the Body, or from a particular Quality that lay hid in it, without so much as attempting to explain what that Nature and Quality was. This is indeed to put Names instead of Things, and to amuse Mankind with a Shadow of Knowledge, which leads them into Obscurity and Error, instead of Light and Truth: Whereas on the contrary, if from the Phenomena we are able to derive some few general Laws or Principles, which are not *hidden* and *occult*, but manifest and obvious Qualities, (though perhaps the Causes of such Qualities may be wholly unknown;) and from these Principles, endeavour to explain the Actions and Properties of corporeal Things: This is to go in a rational Way, and is the only one that can give us any true Satisfaction, and by which we can make any real Improvement in explaining the Wisdom of the Creation. Having premised this in general, to show what Method we ought to proceed in, and what is reasonable to be expected in Enquiries of this Nature:

Wherein the Evil of Imperfection consists.

I COME now to consider particularly wherein the Evil of Imperfection consists; and That in the following Respects. First, with regard to corporeal Things and the Laws they are subject to: Secondly, with regard to Animal Creatures and the Powers they are endued with: And, Thirdly, with regard to Men, and the Faculties peculiar to Them. Strictly and properly speaking, there can be no such Thing as Perfection any where but in God, who is immense, eternal, omnipotent, all-wise, and good. All other Beings, of how high a Rank or Station soever, are but dependent and limited Beings: They owe their Original and all that they possess, to the supreme Being; who as He gave them it out of his own Will and good Pleasure, so He can deprive them of it again when He sees fit. Whenever therefore we speak of Perfection and Imperfection with respect to finite and created Beings, we mean only in a relative Sense, compared one with another: So that the Evil of Imperfection is not properly any Evil at all, but the necessary Consequence of being finite and dependant. And the Objection holds equally against all created Beings whatsoever; it not being possible to suppose any Beings, of how high a Rank soever, but there may be conceived Others still higher, with respect to whom they may be more imperfect: So that either there ought to have been no created Beings at all, or else the Evil of Imperfection will unavoidably follow. And hence arises the different State and Condition of all created Beings. God Almighty is infinitely happy in the Exercise and Enjoyment of his own unspeakable Perfections; and we cannot form in our Minds any nobler Idea of Him, than that He is continually displaying his several Attributes and Perfections, in creating, preserving, and perfecting, such of the infinite Variety of Beings possible to be brought into Existence, as He in his own good Pleasure thinks fit, throughout the numberless Stages of Duration from everlasting to everlasting: all which Beings constitute that Kingdom over which He reigns in Righteousness, to the universal

universal Good of which his all-seeing Providence directs every the most minute *Clarke.* Particular. The whole of *this* therefore, must be resolved into the divine Will. Infinite Understanding *knows* all the *Things* that are possible to be done, all the infinite Variety of Creatures that can be made, what they are capable of and subject to. Omnipotence can do all that can be done, can create any or all, at any Time and in any Place, of those Variety of Creatures: And infinite Wisdom can judge of the Kind, of the Number, of the Time, Place, Duration, and all other Circumstances relating to them. With respect to the supreme Being therefore, we may concerning *these* affirm with *Moses*, *Gen. i.* that *behold they are all very good*, that is, fitted for those Ends and Purposes intended by the Creator.

THUS, to begin with the inferior Part of the Creation: Let us consider the Nature of *material* Things, and the *Laws* they are capable of. *Space* is infinite and boundless, and consequently can contain Variety of all Kinds of Beings; *Matter* is finite and limited, and there is a greater Quantity of it in some Places than in others of the same Dimensions, as is evident from their different Weight: Whence it follows that *Space* is *necessary*, in the same Manner as *Time* or *Duration* is *necessary*; And the very Supposition of its Absence is a Contradiction: For let any one fix in his Mind a particular Part of *Space*, suppose a Cubick Foot, and then try to imagine its Absence. This will be a Cubick Foot of Nothing; which is an express Contradiction, because Nothing has no Properties, and consequently no Dimensions. Wherefore there must necessarily be some *Subject* actually existing without us, to which these Relations belong. But this cannot be affirmed of *Matter*: For *as* That is actually absent from some Places, *so* it might have been absent from all; Its Existence therefore is not necessary, but depends upon the Will of the supreme Being. And the same may be said also of its *Quantity*: As it does not fill all *Space*, it might have been *more* or *less*; and there can be no other Reason assigned for this determinate Measure of it, but only the Will of him that created it, determined by that Proportion which best served the several Purposes He intended by it. The Existence of *only* this particular Quantity of *Matter* therefore cannot be called *Evil*; because it is not at all inconsistent with the Notions we have of infinite *Power* and *Wisdom*, to create *any* of all the possible Things that are the Objects of such *Power* and *Wisdom*; and because there is no Objection against this particular Quantity, but what will hold equally against any other Quantity.

AFTER such Creation, the next Thing to be considered is the *Powers* or *Qualities* of such *Matter*. It is in itself merely *passive*, that is, indifferent either as to *Rest* or *Motion*: It will continue in *either* of those States, 'till it is made to alter them, by receiving *Motion* in proportion to the *Force* that impresses it, and by resisting as much as it is resisted. This *Principle* supposes nothing but bare *Existence*; nothing more is required than the preserving it in Being, and it is a necessary Consequence. But by this *passive* Principle alone, Bodies could never have been put into *Motion*: Some *active* Principle was necessary in order to begin such *Motion*: And if the *Quantity* of it varies, or the *Determination* of it be altered, such *active* Principle is necessary in order to effect those Changes. Hence it follows, that as *Matter* is capable of *Motion*, and there are infinite *Degrees* of Velocity, and infinitely various Determinations of such Velocity, in every *Moment* of Time and every *Point* of *Space*; it must be subject to have any *particular* *Laws* impressed upon it, according to the Will of Him who governs it; None of which *Laws* can properly be styled *Evil*, but in their own Nature perfectly *indifferent*, otherwise than as they are Means to attain such a particular End proposed.

So likewise when we consider *Matter*, not as one uniform *Substance*, whose Parts are necessarily connected with each other; but as consisting of an infinite Number of Particles, which are all distinct Substances, and actually separated and independent of each other; It is manifest, that such Particles may be of very different *Magnitudes* and *Shapes*; their *Order* and *Position* may also be as different; The necessary Result of which, will be various Compositions, arising from such Textures: Every *one* of which Compositions was originally intended by Him who formed it, and consequently is merely arbitrary, and to be resolved into his Will.

Clarke. THESE and such like Considerations will help us to account for the Appearances of the *material* World; and convince us that those Things which have been thought *Ill* or *Irregular* in it, are such *Imperfections* only, as are essentially in the *Nature* of the Things themselves, and the necessary Result of those Laws they are subject to: As will be evident from a particular View of them. *Space* is infinite and boundless, capable of receiving numberless *Systems* of all possible Kinds; But whether *all* such are actually created or no, we know not; Great *Variety* we have reason to think there are, from the *Analogy* of the fixed Stars to the Sun, of which we see no End: And they shining by their own Light, and being at such vast Distances from each other, seem to be Centers about which planetary Bodies revolve, whose reflected Light is too faint to reach our Eye. About *these* therefore we have little more than Conjecture: But concerning *this System* in which we bear a Part, we have Means of knowing enough to judge of the Excellency and Perfection of it. That determinate *Quantity* of *Space* which the heavenly Bodies possess, as also That determinate *Quantity* of *Matter* of which they are composed; the *Division* of it into such a particular *Number* of Bodies, the placing them at such *Distances*, and the impressing such *Laws* of Motion upon them; are originally the manifest Effect of *Choice* and not of *Necessity*; For *that* admits of no *Variation*; and in the Nature of the Things themselves, there can be no Reason of preferring one to the other. But as the supreme Being has an absolute Right to create all Sorts of Creatures, and proposes such a *particular End* or *Perfection* in each of them; If every Thing be the most conducive possible to *That*, 'tis very unreasonable to call it *ill*, when it is the natural and genuine Effect of those Laws which the Things are subject to, and the best Means possible of attaining that particular End or Perfection.

And of the
planetary
System in
particular.

THUS it appears by Observation, that there are but *six* Planets belonging to this Sun; against which Number there can be no Objection made, but what will affect any other Number, it being merely indifferent in itself: And perhaps in other Systems there are different Numbers, and so there may have been or may yet be in *this*. By Observation likewise it appears what *particular* Laws of Motion these Bodies are subject to; That they not only move about the Sun, but that their *periodical Times* are in a *sesqui-alterate* Proportion of their *Distances*; that is, the *Squares* of their *periodical Times* are as the *Cubes* of their *Distances*. This Proportion is the necessary Result of that *Law* of Gravity, to which the *material System* is at present subject: Which *Law* is evidently not *essential* to Matter, but originally is the mere Effect of Choice; which possibly extends not to other Systems, and may not for ever be the Rule in this. And there can be no Complaint made of it, but would have been made for the same Reason against any other. So likewise if we suppose any of the Circumstances of this System different, the Effects will be different likewise; and a new Appearance of Things will follow, which in a comparative Sense only may be called *better* or *worse*.

The Phæ-
nomena of
the Earth's
Motion ac-
counted for.

THUS, to instance in one Particular, *viz.* our Earth; The most natural and simple Motion, is that in a straight Line; to produce any certain invariable Degree of which, nothing more is requisite than one single proportionate Impression, and in this State it would by the mere Laws of Nature continue for ever. But in order to any compound Motion, as That in every *Curve* is, it is necessary that in every *Point* of Space, and every *Moment* of Time, a new Direction should be given to it, by a continually repeated Impression: according to the *Force* of which, compared with the projectile Motion and the Direction, will the *Kind* of the Curve be. If the *projectile* Determination, or Direction of the Tangent, be *perpendicular* to the Distance from the Center or the Radius; and the *projectile* Force be so balanced by the *centripetal* Force, as to keep the Body always at the same Distance from the Center; that is, when the *centripetal* Force is just of that Degree, as to draw the Body in every Instant of Time as much towards the Center, as the *projectile* Force carries it off; the Body will then describe an exact Circle about that Center: But if the *Position* of the Tangent be *oblique* to the Radius, it will move in some other *Curve*, according to the *Degree* of such *Obliquity*, and the *Velocity* given to the projected Body. And hence it is, that the Earth moves about

about the Sun in an *Ellipsis*, of which the Sun is the Focus; The necessary Consequence of which is, that the *Areas* described by it are exactly proportioned to the *Times*; that the *Velocity*, with which it moves, is *greater* in some Part of its Orbit than in others, according as the Force with which it tends to the Sun, conspires with, or retards the *projectile Force*. That the Summer Season is by several Days longer than the Winter, is owing to the Motion of the Equinoctial Points, which in time will coincide with the Apfides of the Earth's Orbit, and then they will be equal.

Clarke.
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THE same may be applied to all the other *Planets*, and the *Irregularities* of them will be found to arise from this Principle: In order for them to partake of the Light and Heat of the Sun, it was necessary that they should revolve about it, at such particular Distances, and in such determinate periodical Revolutions, as are adjusted to their respective Densities; and which upon the whole, is most conducive to obtain the designed End and Effect. It appears by Observation, that they all describe *Ellipses* about the Sun, as the common Focus of all their Orbs; the natural and necessary Effect of which is, that *They* likewise in the same manner as the Earth, describe Areas exactly proportioned to the Times, and move swifter when they are nearer the Sun, than when they are farther off; and that their Year, or periodical Revolution, is divided into two unequal Parts, as our's is, if their Equinoctial Points have any such Motion as our's have; but if they are coincident with their Apfides, the Division of their Years is then equal: But I don't know that Astronomers have as yet determined the Position of the Equinoctial Points of the Planets. All these Things arise from the same Principle, namely, the Degree of projectile Force at first impressed upon them; and the particular Determination, or Inclination of the Tangent to the Radius or Distance from the Center; compared with the Force of Gravitation or Tendency towards such Center. And none of *Them* can be styled *Evil* or *Irregular* when considered singly; and when compared together, they are only relatively so; as in the Nature and Reason of Things, some must be more excellent, have more useful Properties, and serve better Purposes than others. There are various Figures in which Bodies are capable of moving; and abstractly considered, there can be no Reason why *one* should be preferred to *another*. Thus a Circle, an Ellipsis, a Parabola, &c. are in themselves equally *good*, though they have different Properties; and it seems much more agreeable, that the infinite Wisdom and Power of the Creator to whom they are all alike possible, should be displayed in making all the Variety that can be; than that He should be confined to some few Particulars exclusive of the rest. And this is confirmed by Experience in the Works of the Creation. The Planets do all actually move about the Sun in Ellipses, and the Comets in Ellipses so very large, that their Curvatures are insensibly different from those of Parabolas: And there are Instances in Nature, where Bodies are moved so very nearly in Parabolas and Hyperbolas, that their Deviation is not perceptible by our Senses; as in Projectiles, and the Ascent of Fluids. And what other Curves, or different Species of *these*, may be applied to other Systems, we do not certainly know: But there is just Ground to think, that there is infinite Variety, because the Degrees of projectile Force are infinite; the Determination of it, with respect to the Radius is infinitely different, according to the Angle it makes; and the Force of Gravitation may also decrease in any Proportion of Distance: The Result of which, will be so many different Curves, all equally harmonious in their proper Places. Thus we see the Motion of every one of the heavenly Bodies considered separately, is exactly regular and uniform about the Sun, preserved by that single Principle of Gravitation, which hinders them more or less every Moment from flying off in straight Lines: In the same Manner as we see by Experience, that if two homogeneous Bodies of different Magnitudes be connected together by a *Thread* or *Wire*, and a Center be found by dividing the Distance in *reciprocal* Proportion to their Magnitudes; when they are once put in Motion, they will for ever revolve about that Center, unless hindered by some external Force. And the same Reason holds, whatever sort of Matter it be, or how much soever we increase the Distance or Quantity of it: So that if this be applied to the Sun and any of the Planets, it appears upon Calculation to be the very same in *Them* likewise.

The Phenomena of the Planets Motions accounted for.

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Clarke.

The same
applied to
the whole
System.

HAVING thus considered the several Parts of this System singly, and the Laws they are governed by; let us now put them together, and examine what is the Result of such a Composition. It is evident that the Sun was created to communicate Light and Heat: Each of which decreasing in a certain Proportion, *viz.* as the Square of the Distances increase; they can be of use to other Bodies, to a determinate Distance only, and in Proportion to their respective Densities: And hence it is that their Number is limited, and that they extend but to a certain Distance. A luminous and hot Body diffuses its Light and Heat uniformly all round: The most convenient Place for it therefore is the Center; and *these* being Qualities peculiar to the Sun, it is for this Reason made the Center of the planetary System; every Part of which, as it depends upon the Influence of the Sun, so it is proportioned to it in every respect. These two Properties, as they are the most useful, so they are the most universal: For some degree of Heat is necessary to all Kinds of Vegetation and Animal Motion; no Plants or living Creatures could be at all produced or subsist without it: And without Light, both rational and irrational Creatures would be in utter Confusion, not knowing which Way to direct themselves, but would perpetually interfere with each other. It is necessary therefore that every one of the heavenly Bodies should be adjusted to the Sun, both as to their Density, Distance, Quantity of Matter, and the like; that they may all receive from it the greatest Benefit they are capable of. And thus upon strict Enquiry they appear to be; The Heat, (and Light which is proportionable to the Heat,) proceeding from the Sun, is as the Density of its Rays; that is, (if the Sun be considered as a Point, as it may very well be, compared with the whole System,) 'tis reciprocally as the Squares of the Distances: So that were we *twice* as far removed from the Sun as we now are, we should have but a *fourth* Part of the Light and Heat we now enjoy: And were we *four* times as far, we should have but a *sixteenth* Part so much. But it is necessary also to take in the Density of the Bodies to be heated; because two Bodies of unequal Densities, such as *Lead* and *Wood*, will not be equally heated at the same Distance. Wherefore since all the Planets could not revolve about the Sun at the same Distance, their Densities must be, *cæteris paribus*, greater or less at different Distances. And thus upon Examination we observe them to be: *Jupiter* is more dense than *Saturn*, and the *Earth* more dense than *Jupiter*; and *Mercury* probably is much more dense than any of them, (though we have as yet no certain Means of finding out his Density:) For it appears upon Computation, ^d that were our Earth as far removed from the Sun as *Saturn*, the Water would be all turned into Ice; and were it as near the Sun as *Mercury*, it would boil all away into Vapours. I say, this Proportion of the Densities to the Distances, is only *cæteris paribus*; because this Rule does not hold in the smaller Bodies, (such as the Moon,) which are more dense than the larger, for another Reason^e, *viz.* that the Force of Gravitation upon their several Surfaces might approach nearer to an Equality. In general therefore the Planets are placed at such different Distances from the Sun, that each of them might enjoy a proportionable Quantity of Light and Heat, according to the Degree of their respective Densities. The Planet *Mercury*, which is so much nearer to the Sun than we, is in a due Proportion so much denser; and the Planet *Saturn*, which is so much farther remote, is also proportionably rarer. And by this means Light and Heat are the most usefully diffused throughout the whole System. Had it been otherwise, those who are nearest the Sun, would have been destroyed by excessive Heat; and those which are most remote, by extreme Cold; whereas They all now enjoy a due Temperature suited to their respective Uses.

The parti-
cular Law
by which
the plane-
tary System
is govern-
ed.

AND this naturally leads us to enquire what that Law in particular is, by which the Planets are thus adjusted, and what the Consequence of it is: And this can be known only by Observation and Experience of Facts. There are in-

^d Aqua nostra, si Terra locaretur in Orbe Saturni, rigesceret, si in Orbe Mercurii in Vapores statim abiret. *Newt. ibid.*

^e Densiores itaque sunt Planetæ qui sunt minores, cæteris paribus. Sic enim vis gravitatis in eorum Superficiebus, ad æqualitatem magis accedit. Sed & densiores sunt Planetæ, cæteris paribus, qui sunt Soli propiores; ut Jupiter Saturno, & Terra Jove. In diversis utique Distantiis a sole collocandi erant Planetæ, ut quilibet pro gradu Densitatis, calore Solis majore vel minore frueretur. *Newt. Princip. Edit. 2. Lib. III. Prop. viii. Corol. 4.*

numerable

numerable Laws in the Nature and Reason of Things, arising from different Suppositions of several Degrees of Velocity, Centripetal Force and the like, every one of which are equally the Object of the great Creator's *Power*: And it can be resolved only into his *Wisdom* and *Will*, (who has the most perfect Knowledge of his own Designs, and what are the most direct and proper Means to attain them,) *which* particular *one*, out of the infinite Variety, shall be observed in any System: which when it is once determined, whatever is the natural Result of *that*, ought to be esteemed the most *perfect* and *complete* in its Kind; And whatever *Defects* there may seem to be, which unavoidably flow from hence, they cannot properly be styled *Evil* in themselves, but only comparatively less *good*, and such as cannot be prevented or remedied but by changing the Nature of the Things themselves, and giving new Laws to them. Thus that Law of Motion which obtains amongst all the great Bodies throughout this System, is what Astronomers call a *sesquialterate* Proportion of their periodical Times to their Distances; that is, the *Squares* of their periodical Times, are as the *Cubes* of their Distances. This *Law* is necessary under the present Circumstances of the Creation, to preserve that Order and Harmony which is now established in it: But originally it might have been otherwise, and it is now wholly owing to that universal Principle of Gravitation, which in all Bodies is in Proportion to the Quantity of Matter contained in them, and decreases as the Square of the Distance increases.

THIS Property is no way essential to *Matter*; because we can conceive Matter to be absolutely at rest, and therefore indifferent to, and capable of all Kinds of Motion and particular Determinations of it; but it appears to be universally impressed upon Matter, and to extend itself from the greatest Bodies to the most minute Particles of which they are composed. And if we suppose any Alteration here, the whole Frame of Nature is immediately changed. Thus if the Force of Gravitation in the several Planets towards the Sun, had been greater or less according to the simple direct Proportion of their Distances; they would all have revolved about the Sun, in the same Time; supposing them to revolve either uniformly in Circles, or in Ellipses, whose Center is the Center of the centripetal Force: So that their Years would have been of the same Length in the nearest Planets, as in the farthest off. If the Force of Gravitation, instead of decreasing as the Squares of the Distance increase, (as it does now,) had decreased simply as the Distance increased, then the periodical Revolutions of them would have been greater or lesser exactly in Proportion to their respective Distances directly, upon the foregoing Supposition. Any of *these* Laws might have been originally impressed on this System, or they may actually be so on others; and the Result would have been only different Appearances, and different Effects from what we experience now: But abstractly considered, they had been equally *good*, and, with respect to the infinite Creator of all Things, equally the Object of his Wisdom and Power. But though upon any Supposition of Gravity towards one common Center, the Planets might have been made to revolve about that Center in Circles, which are the most regular of all Curves, or in any other similar Figures, whose Parts are similarly described about Centers placed in a similar Position; and the Consequence would in this respect only have been, that their Distances from the common Center, their periodical Revolutions, and the Velocity with which they revolved, would have been very different from what they are now: all which may be as convenient for other possible Systems as the present Law is for this. But then in such Systems, their Planets must not gravitate towards each other as our's do; for if they should, their regular Motions would immediately be disturbed by such mutual Attraction, and they would quickly be diverted from their original Circles into irregular Curves, which in a very short time would confound the whole System: Whereas by the present Law of Gravitation, the several Bodies, of which this System is composed, are made to revolve about the common Center of Gravity, and about each other in Ellipses, very little different from Circles; and all the Deviations they are liable to, from their mutually attracting each other, are so very small, that the Effects are only minute Contractions, Dilatations, and Inclinations of the several Orbits, and the Phænomena arising therefrom;

Clarke. therefrom; all which are so slow, that they may go on for many thousand Years, before any extraordinary Interposition becomes necessary, in order to correct the System. I have instanced in these Proportions so particularly, because they are absolutely necessary to be known, in order to give us a true Notion of the present System of the World; to shew the Wisdom and Contrivance of its excellent Architect, and the Weakness and Folly of those who pretend to find Irregularities in it.

*This Law
the Effect
of Choice
and not of
Necessity
or Chance.*

EVERY single Circumstance of the Things now mentioned is evidently the Effect of *Choice*, and not of *Chance* or *Necessity*. As Space is infinite, That Part which comprehends this System, might have been much greater or less, according to the mere Will of *Him* who prescribed it; and as the *Quantity* and *Kind* and *Division* of the *Matter* contained in it, is also equally arbitrary, *These* also might have been entirely different, according to His good Pleasure; and so likewise might the Laws of Motion, by which they are every one directed. The whole Composition therefore is such, as the great *Creator* intended it should be; who proposing a certain *End* by it, adjusted all the original Forces, so as best to attain that *End*: And having determined the *Time* of its Continuance, and the *Mutations* it should undergo, ordered the whole Connexion accordingly. What this general *End* is, 'tis impossible for us to find out, or for our narrow Capacities fully to comprehend; the Extent of the whole material World being so very great, and the Parts so numerous and so strictly connected together. And the same may be affirmed of many of those Parts, and the several Uses and Purposes for which they are intended. But this hinders not, but that we may find out some of these particular Uses, and approach nearer and nearer to the general *End*, by repeated Observation and Improvement. Thus by the *Analogy* there is betwixt the Planets and our Earth, *viz.* that They also are dark Bodies, revolving about the Sun pretty near in the Plain of the Ecliptick; that their Axes are inclined to this Plain; and that they turn about such Axes: It is very natural to collect, that They also are inhabited by several Species of Animals, who stand in need of Light and Heat, and the like. For by this means, they must in the Course of Things have, like us, a regular Succession of Winter and Summer, Day and Night; and must also have different Climates. The Comets seem to be the most extraordinary Appearances in Nature, and to have been as yet least accounted for; having been thought very irregular and subject to no certain Laws: But from later Observations and more strict Enquiry, even *These* also are found to move in very regular Curves, and to be situated in the best Position with respect to each other; and to be of considerable Use. They appear to be very numerous; which Consideration alone is sufficient to suggest to us, that there must be great Occasion for them in such a System as this. They are a Kind of Planets, being large and dense Bodies, with very gross Atmospheres, and are capable of emitting great quantities of Vapours, as appears from the Bigness and Length of their Tails; And they revolve about the Sun in very large Ellipses, of which the Sun is one of the Focues. From all which we may collect some of their principal Uses also. The Body of the Sun must necessarily be diminished by that vast quantity of Light that is perpetually emitted from it, and therefore in Time will decay and stand in need of a Supply of fresh Materials for Fuel. These may be had from Comets; for by Observation we find that They sometimes approach very near the Body of the Sun, and consequently must at last fall into it: ^f For by reason of their prodigious Swiftmess at that time, and the Density of the Sun's Atmosphere, their Motion must be somewhat resisted and retarded; so that they will revolve nearer and nearer, 'till they run into it. This may also be promoted by the ^g Gravitation of other Comets, when they are in Aphelio; because They move slowest in that Part of their Orbit, and consequently will be retarded by such Attraction, and an Alteration be produced in the Figure of their Orbs. But before they come to This, there are very good Reasons to think that they are of great Benefit to the Planets. Experience shews

^f Propter summam velocitatem in vicinia illa, & densitatem aliquam atmosphære solis, resistantiam non nullam sentire debuit, & aliquantum retardari, & propius ad solem accedere: & singulis revolutionibus accedendo ad solem, incidet is tandem in corpus solis. *Newt. Princip. pag. 480.*

^g Sed & in aphelio, ubi tardissime movetur, aliquando per attractionem aliorum cometarum retardari potest, & subinde in solem incidere. *Newt. ibid.*

us that the Water in the Sea continually decreases, and the dry Ground continually increases; the great Quantity of Vapours which are exhaled from thence, being converted into Nourishment for all kind of Vegetables, which when they come to putrify, are in good measure turned into dry Earth; so that by this means a great part of the Liquid is destroyed: All which Defects are probably supplied from the Tails of Comets: for These consisting chiefly of such Vapours, and spreading themselves to an immense Distance through the heavenly Spaces, ^h may fall by their own Gravity into the Atmospheres of the Planets, and there be condensed, and turned into Water and other Substances. To this we may add, ⁱ that the finest and most spirituous Part of our Air, which is the most subtile and the best, and is necessary to preserve Life in every Thing; may with good Reason, be thought to proceed chiefly from the Comets. And from all these Things put together it is manifest why the Comets are not, like the Planets, confined to the Zodiac, but cut the Ecliptick at all Angles, and move freely through every Part of the Heavens, viz. That when they are at the greatest Distance from the Sun, and move most slowly, they might also be at the greatest Distance from each other, and so disturb one another as little as is possible by their mutual Attraction.

IN this respect then, there is no other *Evil* but what the natural Imperfections of material Things, and the Qualities they are capable of, subject them to. And it is as unreasonable to find fault with the Materials themselves, or the Disposition of them, as it is to complain of an Architect, who designs to build a House for a hundred Years, That the Materials and Contrivance is such, as will not last a thousand. What St. Peter says of Time with respect to the supreme Being, that *one Day is with the Lord as a thousand Years, and a thousand Years as one Day*; ^{2 Pet. iii. 8.} may equally be affirmed of Extension or Motion, and any Powers or Qualities of created Beings. The largest Space that we can conceive, bears no more Proportion to Immensity, than any limited Time does to Eternity: and there is no Velocity so swift, no Qualities of Matter so *intense*, but they are capable of being still increased infinitely, according to the Power and Will of Him who is the original Author of them. It is evident therefore, that as God is present every where, as a living, active, intelligent, and free Being, that endureth from everlasting to everlasting, he must propose to himself some *End* in the Creation, to which all the Parts must be regularly subservient, and endued with such Powers and Qualities as are most conducive towards the Attainment of it. But *what* that *End* is upon the Whole, how extensive the whole Creation is, of what Duration past or to come, or what Alterations it *has* or *will* undergo, is impossible for our shallow Understandings to find out: The utmost we can do, is to observe the exact Harmony of that Part which is within our reach, and to judge of the Wisdom and Knowledge of the Creator in general by this particular Instance of his Workmanship. This is the most obvious Way of Reasoning; and thus, as St. Paul tells us, *That which may be known of God is manifest unto Men, for He hath shewed it unto them.* God is in his own Nature invisible; no Man hath seen, nor can see him; But he may be made known to our Understandings, so far as they are capable of apprehending him, by observing the Excellency of his Works, and from thence collecting the Goodness of their Author: And thus, *the invisible Things of God from the Creation of the World are clearly seen, being understood by the Things that are made, even his eternal Power and Godhead.* This is very eloquently expressed by the Royal Prophet: *The Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament sheweth his Handy-work; Day unto Day uttereth Speech, and Night unto Night sheweth Knowledge: There is neither Speech nor Language nor any Voice heard amongst them; yet their Line (viz. Proportion) is gone out through all the Earth, and their Sound (viz. Harmony,) to the End of the World.* That is, Whoever takes a View of the glorious Fabrick of the Heavens, and sees the Number of the Stars placed therein; cannot but be led immediately to admire the Greatness and Power of Him who created them: And he who goes so far as to examine particularly and

Clarke.

All Evils that arise from hence, are only natural Imperfections.

2 Pet. iii. 8.

Rom. i. 19.

20.

Psal. xix. 1, 2, &c.

^h Vapores autem qui ex — caudis cometarum oriuntur, incidere possunt per gravitatem suam in atmosphas planetarum, & ibi condensari, & converti in aquam & spiritus humidos, &c. *Newt. ibid.*

ⁱ Porro suspicor illum, qui aeris nostri pars minima est, sed subtilissima & optima, & ad rerum omnium vitam requiritur, ex cometis præcipue venire. *Newt. ibid.*

with

Clarke. with the greatest Exactness into their Motions and Order and the like, will reap from thence the most desirable Knowledge: For every Day and Night by their regular Succession, bespeaks as plainly, as inanimate Things can speak, the Wisdom of him who moves them: And their Proportion is so exact and universal, so plain and manifest, that no Nation, Language, or Capacity, can possibly in some Degree or other escape the Observation of them. This Harmony and Proportion was particularly specified by the famous Heathen Philosopher ^k*Pythagoras*, and called the Harmony of the Spheres, so often mentioned by ancient Writers.

This Consideration a sufficient Confutation of Atheism.

AND had the Epicurean Atheists of old, or the forementioned modern Astronomer, duly examined these Things, they would not have so rashly pronounced concerning the *Faultiness* of the Creation; They would have seen on the foregoing Principles, that what upon their Hypotheses is so irregular and uncertain, is in Reality most uniform and determinate; and that all their Complaints are founded upon their Ignorance of the true System of the World, and the not distinguishing betwixt the *true* and *apparent* Motion of the heavenly Bodies. For if the several Planets revolve about the Sun at different Distances, and with different Velocities, and are illuminated by it; it must from thence necessarily follow, that to those Persons who inhabit one of the middle ones, as we on the Earth do, the Others must be sometimes *nearer* and sometimes *farther off*, and have different *Appearances*, according to their respective *Position*. Those that are betwixt us and the Sun, must have all the Phases which the Moon has, according as the enlightened Part is turned to or from us; and Those which are more remote, must appear sometimes *bigger* and sometimes *less*, must seem to go *forwards* in some Parts of their Orbs, and to stand *still* or go *backwards* in other Parts, according to the Difference or Equality of their Velocity. All these Irregularities are only *relative*, and such as could not possibly be avoided upon the present Constitution of Things. And if we suppose the original Disposition of them to have been different from what it is now, and other Powers and Qualities impressed on them; there would then arise only different Appearances, and other Kinds of Irregularity: So that the Variety being infinite, it must depend entirely on the Will of the Creator which of them shall actually exist, they being all equally *good* with respect to Him.

Whence the Irregularities of any Part of this System proceed.

HAVING thus examined the natural *Imperfections* which are inherent in the greater Bodies of this System compared with each other, let us come now to a particular Examination of the several Parts of our own Earth and what belongs to it, so far as they affect us; That we may see whence all those *natural Evils* arise, which both Mankind and all other Creatures are subject to. And here it will be more difficult to account for the great Variety of Phænomena; because the heavenly Bodies are very large and visible; their Distances such as are easy to be observed; and their Revolutions afford sufficient Time for taking Notice of them. But *These* are much more complex: They depend upon the particular Constitution of Parts so small, that they are absolutely invisible not only to the naked Eye, but even however assisted by Art: nay some are utterly impossible to be seen at all, (such as the Rays of Light, because they are themselves the *Means* of seeing all Objects;) Wherefore it is very hard to find out their different Shapes and Magnitudes, the Position they are placed in with respect to each other, the original Forces impressed upon them, and the Laws they are governed by, consequent thereon. Yet such Improvements have been lately made in natural Knowledge, as are not only sufficient to convince us in the general, that all *these* are exactly proportioned to each other; but enable us by repeated Experiments, to assign the very *Laws* by which they are regulated, so that we can determine what the Effect will be, and consequently what would arise from any Alteration of them.

These also are the Effect of some particular Laws of Motion.

SOME of the principal of these Laws it will be necessary to enquire particularly into, in order to see wherein the *Good* or *Evil*, the *Perfection* or *Imperfection* of that *Thing* or *Being* consists, which is governed by them. Thus the several Parts of the Earth are compacted together in the Form of a Globe, by the Law of *Gravitation* of all those Parts towards the Center; All Kinds of Plants are generated and increase by the Law of *Vegetation*; inferior Animals, such as Beasts and Birds,

^k Macrobius, *lib. 2. in Som. Scip.*

are governed by *Instinct*; And *Men*, which are the highest Order of Beings here, *Clarke.* have beside *these*, the Law of *Reason* to direct their Actions. *These* are so many distinct Principles, accommodated to the Nature of those Beings in which they inhere; according to the Kind and Degree of which they are *more* or *less* perfect; and according to the different Composition of them, does the one prevail over the other: And by distinctly considering the respective *Ends* or *Uses* they naturally serve, the *Imperfections* and *Abuses* they are necessarily liable to, and how much the *one* is compensated by the *other*, we shall be able to form a true Notion of *Good* and *Evil*, and to see from whence each of them arise. As to the Body of the Earth in general, with which we ought to connect the Moon, its near Neighbour and constant Attendant; They are the greatest Confirmation that can be, of the forementioned Law of Gravitation: For by this single Principle every the most minute Irregularity in them is accounted for. It is obvious to any one who considers the Moon's Position with respect to the Sun and Earth, that it must be very differently affected by them, and its Course perpetually interrupted: And its Motion is still more complicate, because its Plain is different from that of the Ecliptick, which it may originally have been coincident with, and by the common Law of Gravity, have gradually arrived at the present Inclination to it, which in process of Time may come to be so great as to call for the *Manus Emendatrix*. Yet so well known is the Cause of its Motion, that though it continually alters its Course, yet its Place may be exactly determined for any particular Time to come, from Tables made in a very exact Manner by the great Pains and Industry of late Astronomers, whose numerous and most accurate Observations can never be too much esteemed. And as the Moon's Motion in its Orb is thus exactly stated, so likewise the Figure of its Body, and the Situation of it with regard to us, is owing to the same Cause: For as the Force of Gravitation is greater or less, in the forementioned Proportion to the Distance; it must of necessity be, that That Part of the Moon's Body which is nearest to the Earth, must be more strongly attracted than that which is farthest off: and consequently if it were a Fluid, or if it be not one continued Body, but the Parts distinct from each other; the Force by which they would tend to their own Center, and make an exact Globe, is diminished on one Side and increased on the other; so that it must become oblong, and have its longer Axis pointing towards the Earth: And if we suppose it to revolve about its other Axis, the same Face must always be turned towards us; for it would not rest in any other Position, but be perpetually librating to and fro, 'till it came to this Situation. So likewise with regard to the Earth and its Revolution about the Sun, nothing more is requisite to solve all the various Prænomena, but this single Thing, that the Axis about which it turns every Day, be inclined to the Plain of the Ecliptick in an Angle equal to the Complement of the Sun's greatest Declination, and that it keep the same Parallelism continually, (that is, move always parallel to an Axis passing through the Center of the *magnus Orbis*, and inclined to the Plain of it always with the same Angle.) Hence must arise the perpetual Succession of Day and Night, and the Increase and Decrease of them; and hence must proceed different Seasons of the Year, Spring and Summer, Autumn and Winter. To this Cause are owing the various Climates of the several Parts of the World, the extreme Heat in some, and the excessive Coldness in others; And to this Cause likewise is owing the unequal Approach and Return of the Sun from one Tropick to the other.

THUS we have seen the Origin of every Irregularity that appears in the greater *These Irr.* Bodies of this System, and may say with the wise Son of *Sirach*, that *all the* *gularities* *cast no Re-* *fection on* *the Good of* *the whole.* *Works of the Lord are exceeding good, and whatsoever He commandeth shall be accomplished in due Season, and none may say, What is this? Wherefore is that?* *Ecclef. xxxix. 16.* *For at Time convenient they shall all be sought out.—All the Works of the Lord are good, and he will give every needful Thing in due Season; so that a Man cannot say, This is worse than that, for in Time they shall all be well approved.* It is only our Ignorance or partial Consideration of the Works of Nature, that makes us think we see great *Faults* in them: But if we examine more closely into them, or if we try to mend them, it presently appears that the Mistake is in ourselves. Thus it has been thought, that if the Earth and Planets moved about the Sun as

Clarke. a Center, in exact Circles, the System would be more beautiful and uniform than it is now: But this is a very great Error; for though the System might be esteemed better in that particular respect, yet something much worse than the present small Irregularities would arise, *viz.* that the System would not be governed by one stated certain Law, as it is now; but Forces must be continually added or diminished, in order to effect such an Hypothesis: For supposing the Planets did move originally in Circles, (as possibly they did,) according to the present Laws; yet still their Velocities must have been different, and consequently they must have overtaken each other; And then the mutual Actions of Comets and Planets upon one another must necessarily have altered the Figures of their Orbs, and created those little Irregularities which are scarce worth Notice, ¹as is observable in *Jupiter* and *Saturn* near their Conjunction. Therefore in the present State there is the least Inconvenience that the Nature of Things will admit: And *That* is abundantly compensated by the superior Convenience. Thus the Inequality of the Earth's Velocity and Distance from the Sun, makes no sensible Difference from what it would be, if it moved in a perfect Circle, as to the Benefit we receive from its Light and Heat. Eight Days bear but a small Proportion to half the Year, and the *Excentricity* is but as near seventeen to a thousand, which can produce but very little Effect. And the same may be applied to all the other Parts of the System: They serve the End for which they were appointed, in the best manner possible upon the whole; and they are all so strictly connected, that if we try to vary or disturb them, the Consequence tends to confound all the Frame of Nature. So that notwithstanding the Objection of Atheists in this particular, we may affirm with the Royal Psalmist, That *God appointed the Moon for Seasons, and the Sun knoweth his going down*: That as He has made the heavenly Bodies to have a mutual Influence upon each other, so He has determined the particular Course and Order of them, which they never in the least deviate from. And the Words of *Job* upon the like Occasion will well become such Objectors: *Behold, I am vile, What shall I answer thee? I will lay my Hand upon my Mouth. Once have I spoken, but I will not answer; yea twice, but I will proceed no farther.* And that this will be the Case with relation to the Government of the World in Those Particulars which more nearly relate to us, the *Evil* of which is so greatly complained of, will appear by the like Examination of them.

Psal. civ.
19.

Job xl. 4.

Objections
concerning
Earth.

LET us therefore consider the several Parts of which our own Earth is composed, and the Manner we are affected by them; that we may see whence all those *natural Evils* arise, which both Mankind and other Creatures are subject to. Upon a particular Enumeration of the Works of the Creation in the first Chapter of *Genesis*, they are pronounced *very good*, and such as are worthy of God to be the Author and Framer of; yet there is scarce any *one* of them, but in some respect or other has afforded Matter of Complaint, and been thought by some an Objection against the Wisdom and Goodness of the Creator.

With re-
gard to the
Inanimate
Part of it.

THE dividing the Light from the Darkness, (§ 4.) in the Manner it now is, has been objected against, as very unequal with respect to the several Parts of the Earth: Likewise the gathering together of the Waters unto one Place, that the dry Land might appear, which caused the *Earth* and *Sea*, is also attended with many *Inconveniencies*; For such is the Proportion, and Division of them, that the Quantity of Water is so very great in some Parts, as to form large Seas and Lakes, and none at all in other Parts; by which means vast Tracts of Land become barren Deserts. The Quality of the Water is also objected against, *viz.* its Saltness, by which it is rendered unfit for Drink, and for many other Uses of fresh Water: And, which is still worse, 'tis liable to produce Deluges, by which whole Countries are overflowed and destroyed. The Air also, with which the Earth is surrounded, and which is so absolutely necessary to Life, that no Kind of Animals, nor even Plants can be at all preserved without it; is subject to perpetual Storms and Tempests, Thunderings and Lightnings; The Effects of which are often fatal to Men and other Creatures: And it is many times so infected and corrupt, as to cause Plagues and Famines, by which whole Cities and Countries are depopulated

¹ Newt. Princip. Prop. XIII. lib. 3.

and made desolate. The Grasse, Herbs, and Trees, yielding Seed and Fruit after *Clarke*, their Kind, (¶ 12.) have also their Objections: Many of them are noxious and poisonous; and others of them are said to be a Curse rather than a Blessing, (Chap. iii. ¶ 17.) *Cursed is the Ground for thy sake — Thorns and Thistles shall it bring forth unto thee.*

AND as the *Inanimate* Part of the Creation, is thus liable to Disorder and Irregularity; The *Animate* and *Rational* Part is subject to much greater Evils and Inconveniences. The various Kind of Fish with which the Seas and Rivers are filled; the different Sorts of Birds that fly in the Air; and the Fowls, Beasts, and creeping Things that move on the Surface of the Earth; These are a Prey to each other: The weakest and most defenceless are Food for the strongest, who are provided with natural Weapons to take and devour them: And many of them are hurtful and some poisonous to Mankind. But the greatest of all *Evils* are those that Man is subject to. Though He was *created in the Image of God*, that is, made Lord and Governour of this lower World; yet *He was formed out of the Dust of the Ground, and had the Breath of Life breathed into his Nostrils, whereby he became a living Soul*, Chap. ii. ¶ 7. This Composition renders him liable to numberless Accidents and Calamities. That Body which is made of Dust, must be liable to be resolved into Dust again: And there are Variety of Means by which this may be effected. And as He becomes living and sensible, by the Breath of Life, so must He be obnoxious to Pain, Diseases, and Death: *In the Sweat of thy Face shalt thou eat Bread, 'till thou return unto the Ground out of which thou wast taken*; Chap. iii. ¶ 19. These are Calamities which Mankind are subject to, in common with all other animal Creatures; but they are endued moreover with Reason and Liberty, from which arise still greater *Evils* than any of the forementioned ones, *viz.* all Kinds of Immorality and Wickedness, which have brought greater Calamities and Desolation upon them, than all the natural Causes put together; a large Catalogue of which *St. Paul* gives us in the first Chapter of the *Romans*. This is the Division of the several Parts of this lower World, in the original Formation of it, according to the Days in which they were created: And notwithstanding the forementioned Objections, they are singly at the Conclusion of every Day's Work pronounced *good*; *and God saw that they were good*. By which must be meant, that they are such as are agreeable to the Wisdom and Goodness of God to make; That they are as perfect as the Nature of Things will allow them to be; And that, whatever Defects or Abuses they are subject to, are upon the whole sufficiently compensated by that general *Fitness* they have to obtain the End proposed by them. This will more plainly appear, by considering the several Parts of the Earth, and the Inhabitants belonging to them; the Materials, of which they are composed, and the Laws they are subject to: From whence arise all those *Evils* of Imperfection, which I proposed to account for. By *Analogy*, we might justly conclude, from what has been shown concerning the exact Harmony and regular Motions of the greater Bodies of this System, that the several Parts, of which these Bodies themselves are composed, are also with respect to each other adjusted most nicely, and made subject to such Laws, as are proper for the Uses designed by them; And that all their *Irregularities*, are only *seemingly* and *comparatively* such, and the *natural* Effects of those Powers and Qualities with which they are endued. This is a very natural and easy Inference; And the modern Improvements in Philosophy have rendered it not only conjectural, but certain: For by numberless Experiments, and a diligent Examination of the Nature of Things, they seem to have been composed in the following Manner.

THAT the great Creator of all Things proposed certain Ends by every Thing that He has made, is evident to the most common Observation: For no Man can really be so void of Reason, as to think that his Eye was not made to see with, or his Ear to hear with; or that the Objects of Sight or Hearing are not nicely calculated to reflect the Rays of Light, and to excite Vibrations in the Air, in a due Manner and just Proportion, so as best to attain to those Ends proposed. And the same may be affirmed of every Particular throughout the whole Creation. Whence

it

The original Constitution of Things on the Earth.

Clarke. it seems highly probable, ^m That God Almighty at the Beginning, created just such a *Quantity* of Matter, as is proportioned to the *Space* in which it was to move; That the *Original* Particles of this Matter are *solid, impenetrable*, and very lasting; That they are of a particular Figure and Bigness, and endued with particular Laws of Motion; From the various *Texture* and *Composition* of which, arise those different Sorts of Bodies of which this World is constituted. The Variety of *These* is infinite, and the possible Varieties of them are all equally the Object of infinite Power. It belongs therefore to Wisdom and Knowledge to determine *which* shall actually exist, and *which* will best serve the Ends and Purposes of the Creator: And to Us they can only be known by Experience and Observation: From whence we collect, that the original Particles of Matter are perfectly solid, without any Interstices or Pores, (which all compound Bodies have, whose Parts touch one another in but very few Points, and which bear but a small Proportion to that Space which they possess, as appears by their different Densities;) the original Particles, I say, are so hard as not to be worn or diminished, and are not capable of being broken into still smaller Pieces by any Force how great soever in Nature; because, if we suppose *These* to undergo any Alteration, the whole Nature of Things, which depends entirely upon them, would immediately be changed, and quite different ones arise. Thus, if we conceive the *Earth* or *Water*, as it now is, to be formed of such Particles as are before described, and that the Differences in those Bodies are owing wholly to the different Texture and Composition of such Particles; if *these* be by any Means lessened or put into new Figures, the Result must unavoidably be another Sort of Earth and Water from what we now behold, and such as perhaps does or may exist in other Parts of the Universe. As to the particular Figures and Bigness of these Particles, it is not possible for us to know them: They are so small that no Improvements of Art can reach to the Discovery of them: But some general Laws which they are subject to, we can by Observation arrive at; and These discover to us the wonderful Contrivance of their various Compositions, and will help us to account for the Irregularities and Imperfections which are objected against them.

The particular
Laws they
are sub-
jected to.

THE principal of these Laws are *Gravitation, Cohæsion*, and *Fermentation*: By which Words we do not mean to explain the *Causes*, but only to signify particular *Kinds* of Motions or *Tendencies*, whatever *Causes* they are owing to. ⁿ Thus as by *Gravitation* is meant That *Tendency* which all Bodies have mutually and equally towards each other, and is always exactly proportionable to the *Quantity* of Matter contained in them; So by *Cohæsion* is meant another sort of ^o *Tendency*, (which is vastly stronger than that of Gravity,) whereby the *smaller* Parts of all solid Bodies, when they come within a certain Distance, or perhaps touch each other in some Points, are strongly united together; The particular *Manner* or *Degree* of which, is very hard to find out; because the Distances are so very small before they begin to act upon each other, that we cannot well assign any *Proportion* that they bear to each other. And by ^p *Fermentation* is meant that contrary *Tendency* which is in the Particles of fluid Bodies to recede and fly off from each other, with certain Degrees of Velocity not yet exactly determined; though by its regular Effects, in *emitting, reflecting*, and *inflecting* the Rays of Light, and in the producing of *Air* and *Vapours*, it appears that the Cause of These must be regular and act uniformly according to some certain Law. These and such like particular Kinds of Motion impressed on the original Particles of Matter, are the universal Laws of Nature, by which every Thing is formed, and by which alone the present Phenomena can

^m Quibus quidem rebus omnibus bene perspectis & consideratis, illud mihi videtur denique simillimum veri; utique Deum optimum maximum, in principio rerum, *Materiam* ita formasse, ut primigeniæ ejus particulæ, e quibus deinceps oritura esset corporea omnis natura, solidæ essent, firmæ, duræ, impenetrabiles, & mobiles; iis magnitudinibus & figuris, iisque insuper proprietatibus, eoque numero & quantitate pro ratione spatii in quo futurum erat ut moverentur; quo possent ad eos fines, ad quos formatae fuerant, optime deduci. *Newt. Optices*, Edit. 2. p. 409.

ⁿ Hanc vocem *attractionis* ita hic accipi velim, ut in universum solummodo vim aliquam significare intelligatur, qua corpora ad se mutuo tendant; cuicunque demum causæ attribuenda sit illa vis. *Ibid.* pag. 380.

^o Qui autem istiusmodi præduræ particulæ, adpositæ solummodo inter se, seque invicem in perpaucis tantum punctis contingentes, cohærescere queant; idque tanta vi, quanta experientia novimus, utique, nisi causa sit aliqua quæ efficiat ut eæ ad se invicem *attrahantur* vel *apprimantur*, concipi vix potest. *Ibid.* pag. 396.

^p Nam particulæ e corporibus excussæ per calorem vel fermentationem, simulac e sphaera attractionis corporis sui evaserint, recedunt deinceps & ab illo & a se invicem magna cum vi; rursusque accedere fugiunt. *Ibid.* p. 402.

be explained; And they are derived from certain Principles *really* acting upon them according to the forementioned Rules. For all that such Particles are capable of in themselves, is only mere Passiveness; and therefore the various Degrees and Determinations of Motion, must be owing to some active Cause continually exercising certain *Forces* upon them; which *Forces* are of different Degrees, and applied in a *different*, though always regular and uniform Manner; and therefore ought to be distinguished from each other.

THAT there should be only three or four such universal Principles from whence the whole Phænomena of Nature arise, and upon which all the Properties and Actions of corporeal Things depend, can be ascribed only to the mere Will of him who created them. They might have been more or fewer in Number; they might have been different in Kind or Degree: For, abstractedly considered, there is no End of the Variety, and in infinite Space there is Room for the Exercise of them all. *Those* that we experience here, are such as in the general are admirably well suited to the Purposes for which they are appointed; and if at any Time they fail of attaining them, it is only through such *Imperfection* as in the Nature of Things they must be subject to, and which could not be prevented or avoided but by changing their original Properties, and then *Imperfections* of a different Kind would have arisen, which would have been liable to the same Objections as the present ones.

THUS by the forementioned Principle of Gravitation, all the Parts of the Earth tend towards the Centre; the natural Consequence of which is, that the whole Earth is compacted into the Form of a Globe, the lighter Parts giving Way to the heavier till they are all exactly ballanced. And this is the most convenient Form, for turning about its own Axis; that every Part might have its Proportion of the Sun's Light and Heat; and this affords also a much larger Surface for Inhabitants, and Food necessary to support them, than if the Earth had been flat and thin, as some of the Ancients imagined it was. But this Form must necessarily be a little altered by the Earth's diurnal Rotation; for thereby the Parts of the Earth about the Equator moving so much swifter than those towards the Poles, must by their Endeavour to fly off in streight Lines, diminish the Force of Gravity, and consequently those Parts must be higher; and so^a by Experience they are found to be, the Difference being about thirty one Miles. And if it was not thus, the Sea would sink at the Poles, and rise at the Equator and overflow all the Places about it. By this Force also Things are retained upon the Superficies of the Earth, and all Kinds of Animals are capable of moving upon it, and all Bodies acquire great Motion by falling.

By the Principle of *Cohæsion*, which is so much stronger than that of *Gravity*, the original Particles of Matter are united together, so as by their various Texture and Composition to form those different Sorts of Bodies which we observe in Nature, the several Kinds of Solids and Fluids; to enumerate the Particulars of which would be to instance in all the Works of the Creation. Some of the Principal we shall have occasion to consider, both as to the *End* they serve, and the *Irregularities* they are capable of; from whence we may judge of the rest, the whole being uniform and analogous. So likewise by the Principles of *Fermentation*, Heat and Life are preserved and maintained; the Sun itself is nourished and cherished hereby, which affords such Plenty of Light and Warmth to all the Parts of this System. All Generation and Vegetation of Plants and Animals is owing to *this*; the Juices in the one, and the Blood in the other, is kept in perpetual Heat and Motion thereby. So that were it not for these Principles of Motion, the whole material World would quickly become a mere passive Lump of useless Matter; the Earth and Planets would be involved in everlasting Cold and Darkness, and all the Species of Creatures in the Universe would immediately die.

^a By the Vibrations of Pendulums; for the same Number of Vibrations of a given Pendulum in those Places which are near the Equator, require longer Time than in those near the Poles; wherefore the Spaces which heavy Bodies by falling describe in a given Time by the accelerative Force of Gravitation, are greater as they approach nearer the Poles, and consequently the Force of Gravity is greater in those Places, and for that Reason they are nearer the Centre of the Earth.

Clarke. HAVING thus briefly described the Nature and Effect of the chief of those Laws, by which Things are at present regulated; by a particular Application of them we shall be able to answer the forementioned Objections against the Excellency and Perfection of the present State of the Creation, and, notwithstanding such small Irregularities, to say with the Royal Psalmist, *Psal. civ. v. 24, &c.* O Lord, how manifold are thy Works, in Wisdom hast thou made them all. The Earth is full of thy Riches; so is the great and wide Sea, wherein are Things creeping innumerable, both small and great Beasts. For if it appears upon the whole, that there is a particular End proposed by God Almighty in the Creation; that the several Parts of it are endued with such Powers and Qualities as are most conducive to that End; and that every natural Evil or Irregularity is such only as in the Course of Things could not be prevented but by destroying also that Principle from whence every Thing that is good and regular proceeds: If this, I say, be evident, all such Objections must immediately vanish, and we may pronounce with Moses, that every Thing which God has made, is very good, though comparatively speaking some Things are much more perfect than others. And that this is the present Case, is what I shall endeavour to show in the principal Instances alleged; and give such particular Answers, as the modern Improvements in natural Knowledge furnish us with; and I shall follow the Order observed in this Chapter.

These answers to the forementioned Objections.

Gen. i.

The Objection of the unequal Division of Land and Water considered.

THE unequal Division of Day and Night, Light and Darkeness, and the Uses thereof, have been already considered.

THE next Thing is the Separation of the Water and the Land, which distinguishes the Globe into two Parts, the one called *Earth*, and the other *Seas*. The Design and End of this is obvious, viz. for the Convenience of those several Species of Creatures which were to inhabit each of them. The Earth is accommodated with every Thing necessary to maintain Men and Beasts, and the Sea with every Thing necessary to preserve Fishes. The Proportion of these to each other, is what has been objected against; but without the least Foundation of Reason or Experience; for it appears from Observation, that the Seas are no bigger than is requisite to preserve the present Constitution of the Earth. Water is necessary towards the Support of all Kinds of Plants and Animals: They can neither be produced nor preserved without it, and therefore it ought to be distributed to every Part of the Earth; as it is accordingly done from the Seas, as a Treasure and Magazine. The Sun, by its Heat, causes the Water, which is impregnated with nutritious Particles, to rise up into Vapours in so great a Quantity, as to form themselves into thick Clouds, which being carried about by the Wind, are dispersed and fall down in Rain, which moistens the Ground and renders it fruitful. Or else these Vapours are condensed by the Cold on the Tops of high Mountains, and by that Means produce Fountains, which gather as they run along, till they become Rivers affording Plenty of Water for all the Uses of Life. And as there is this Reason in Nature for so great a Quantity, so is there also as good a Reason for that particular Quality of it, its *Saltiness*. Fresh Water must be in continual and quick Motion to keep it from putrifying and stinking; but the Channels of the Ocean are so large, as to render them incapable of a swift Current, so that it can have no more Motion than is given it by the Winds, the Reciprocation of the Tides, and the Revolution of the Earth about its own Axis. But these are not sufficient, as appears from hence, that if it be calm but three or four Days, the Water in the Ocean corrupts and breeds Animals, which stink and infect the Air. To compensate this want of Motion therefore the Water was made Salt, which produces the same Effect as violent Motion would do, and is separated from it when it is exhaled into Vapours. By this single Instance we see what a wrong Judgment Men are apt to make when they view Things in one Light only, or make undue Comparisons of them, and thence proceed to find Fault with and con-

^r Maria ad constitutionem Terræ hujus omnino requiruntur, idque ut ex iis per calorem solis vaporis copiose satis excitentur, qui vel in nubes coacti decidunt in pluviis, & terram omnem ad procreationem vegetabilium irrigent ac nutriant; vel in frigidis montium verticibus condensati (ut aliqui cum ratione Philosophantur) decurrant in Fontes & Flumina. *Newt. Princip. Edit. Sec. p. 473.*

demn them. The several *Evils* and *Inconveniences* which arise from this particular Constitution of Sea and Land, are such only as are the unavoidable Consequences of those Laws by which each of them is governed, and are the fewest that in the Nature of Things can be, when they are adjusted in the best Manner possible. To take therefore one single Part, and to imagine it might have been better in some Respects than it is, without connecting the whole, and seeing what Uses it may best serve with Regard to *that*, is a very unfair and partial Way of arguing. To make the Objection good, it ought to be shown, how the original Disposition and Order of the Parts could have been better in all Respects, to serve that *End* which they are manifestly intended for. But we are so far from being able to do that, that if we try but to alter any of them in *Quantity*, *Quality* or *Place*, we immediately see the Absurdity of it. Thus, had the Quantity of Water in the Sea been *less* than it is, it would not have been sufficient to afford Rain for the whole Earth; for there are at present large Tracts of Land, which seem to be barren and desolate for want of Moisture. And were the Quantity much *greater* than it is, probably there would be as great a Part of the Earth rendered useless on the other Hand through the Abundance of it. And the same may be affirmed of the other Circumstances of it. It was not intended for Drink, either for Men or Animals who live on the Earth, the Rivers being sufficient for that Purpose; and it is very proper Drink for those Creatures that live in the Sea; its Saltness therefore is no just Objection against it, and the Inundations that are caused by it, if it be considered how seldom they happen, what a Complication of Causes they are owing to; such as the low Situation of some particular Countries, whose Defences are only artificial and weak; the incidental high Winds, Spring-Tides, Season of the Year, and many other Circumstances all conspiring together; considering also what Remedies there are in Nature to prevent or provide against them; these will not hinder us from thinking, *That God has established his Decree upon the Sea, and set Bars and Doors, and said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further; and here shall thy proud Waves be stayed.*

Job
xxxviii.
10, 11, &c.

OF the same Kind is the Objection drawn from the Inequality of the Earth's Surface, consisting of Mountains, Vallies and Plains, every one of which have their *Inconveniences*; but much greater would follow, if it were otherwise. This Inequality is in itself very inconsiderable, though it appears to us very great; for the highest Mountains bear but a very small Proportion to the Earth's Diameter, by which they ought to be estimated. And if we suppose this Irregularity removed, and that the Superficies of the Earth were exactly even and level; the Consequence would be, that the Water which is lightest, would diffuse itself every where uniformly and cause an universal Deluge. An Inequality therefore was absolutely necessary, to separate the Land from the Water, and to keep the Rivers in perpetual Motion: Besides, the great Use of Mountains was before hinted, *viz.* to collect Vapours and condense them into Springs; for the Tops of very high Mountains are observed to be perpetually involved in Clouds, and to be covered very deep with Snow, and to be extreme cold; all which cause that great Number of Springs and Rivulets which are every where found in the Sides of such Mountains. To which may be added, that the choicest Fruits grow on the Sides of Mountains, which being oblique are most exposed to the Heat of the Sun; and in the Bowels of them are contained the most useful Minerals. Some of these Mountains are indeed very dangerous and destructive, such as the several burning Mountains which many Times overspread the neighbouring Country with Fire and Ashes: The Cause of which is to be ascribed to the forementioned Principle of *Fermentation*, and is the natural Result of it. And were this removed, a much greater Evil would unavoidably follow; for it is observed, that those Parts of the Earth abound very much with Sulphur, and Salts, and Minerals, all which are absolutely necessary towards the Fertility of the Earth, and to Vegetation and Life in Plants and Animals; for these, by mixing together, first grow warm, as we see in Baths; and in other Places become extreme hot, and at last take Fire; and by their sudden Expansion in the Caverns of the Earth, either cause Earthquakes by tearing it in

The Ob-
jection of
the Inequa-
lity of the
Earth's
Surface,
considered.

^f Et nunc sicca, prius celeberrima fontibus, Ide. Ovid. Metam. Lib. II. v. 218.

Clarke. Pieces, or else force their Way out of one particular Passage, and so form burning Mountains. And this seems to be the Original of them, and that Method by which, in the present Course of Things, such *fermenting* Particles are dissipated throughout the Air and Earth, in order to produce the Effects designed by them. For most very high Mountains are observed to have Ashes on or near the Top of them; which looks as if they were generated this Way. If therefore we consider of what vast and universal Use the Materials are which spring from this Fountain, we shall be so far from thinking them *evil*, or intended to be *mischievous* to Mankind or other Creatures, that on the contrary, such *Evil* is only partial and accidental, and the least that in the Nature of the Thing can be; and the *Good* and *Benefit* on the other Hand, the greatest and most universal: In the same Manner as Heat and Light, are the most universally beneficial to the World; yet too great a Quantity or Intensity of either of them, is as mischievous and destructive to all Creatures; notwithstanding which, it was necessary that such a Quantity or Intensity should be in some Places: So these *fermenting* Materials are very useful: And it is as weak an Objection against this Usefulness, that where a large Supply of them is collected together, they must by the same *Principle* be liable to exert a proportionably violent Force, attended with as violent Effects.

*The Ob-
jection
concerning
Heaths
and De-
serts, &c.
considered.*

THE remaining Part of this Objection, relates to barren Heaths and large Deserts; *some* of which are uninhabited, and *others* seem by their Sandiness and Want of Water, to be utterly incapable of any Inhabitants, at least of Men. These seem to arise partly from the voluntary Neglect of Men, and partly from the Imperfection of the present State of Things. From the Carelessness of Men, in neglecting to cultivate and improve them: For it seldom happens, even in those Places, but that there are different Sorts of Earth, not so far distant from each other, but that by Art and Industry, they may be mixed together in such a Manner as to become fertile; whereas on the contrary, Men have not only neglected to make such Improvement, but by Luxury and Wars, and the like, have depopulated whole Countries, and rendered even *those* barren and unfruitful which Nature had made rich and plenteous. That Part which arises from the *Imperfection* of the present Course of Things is, that originally these very Places, which are now so desolate, might possibly be furnished with all Manner of Plenty, and yet be naturally reduced to their present State. For *Moisture* is absolutely necessary to the producing and increasing of all Kinds of Vegetables, which, upon their Dissolution, is in great Part converted into dry Earth; (all putrified Liquors affording some Sort of Muddiness.) Whence it follows, that in this whole Globe of Earth, the Moisture must continually decrease, and the dry Ground increase; and unless there be a Supply from some other Cause, it must in Time totally fail. It is not therefore Matter of Wonder, if from all these Causes put together, upon View of the several Countries of the World, compared with each other and with themselves at distant Times; it appears that *one* is so much more fertile and plentiful than *another*; that *that* which was once a Garden, should become a Wilderness; and where formerly a populous and potent Nation dwelt, we now behold nothing but Sand and Desert. These are such natural *Evils*, as the Constitution of the Surface of the Earth unavoidably renders it subject to.

*Objections
relating to
the Air
considered.*

AND if we proceed from hence to the Air with which the Earth is incomparted, we shall find, that *this* also has its Inconveniences and Irregularities. From hence come Storms and Tempests, Thundrings and Lightnings, which often-times destroy Men and Beasts, and blast the Fruits of the Earth. And from some Corruption or Infection of *this*, arise Pestilences and Famines, by which whole Cities and Countries are depopulated and made desolate. And here also we ought to consider, what is the natural Result of the Constitution of the Air; how universally beneficial it is; whether such Phænomena do not proceed from some particular Circumstances of it; whether they also may not be of some Use; or whether the preventing them would not be of worse Consequence; and how much of this Inconvenience may be owing to Mens *Neglect* or *Abuse*. The general Constitution of the Air, (as appears by numberless Experiments) is such as arises from a Property or particular Motion of its Particles, directly contrary to that
of

of Gravitation or Cohæſion. For by theſe latter Powers, they have a Tendency *Clarke.* towards each other; but by that [†] Springineſs or Elasticity with which they are endued, they have a Tendency to recede from each other, and to expand themſelves into a Space many hundred thouſand Times bigger than they poſſeſſed when in the Form of a condensed Body. This is very evident to Thoſe who are acquainted with the Method of working by Algebra, where the *negative* Quantities begin as the *poſitive* ones end; ſo here, where the Force of *Attraction* ceases, the contrary Force of *repelling* or *receding* begins. And it may alſo not unfitly be illuſtrated by the Motion of the heavenly Bodies about the Sun: For in that Part of their Orb in which the projectile Force conſpires with *that* of Gravitation, they tend towards the Sun; and in the other Part where *Theſe* are contrary to each other, they recede from it: And if we ſuppoſe their Orbits changed from Ellipſes to Hyperbola's, and the Seat of the Force transferred from the Focus of the Hyperbola into which the Ellipſis is changed, to that of the conjugate Hyperbola, the *Centripetal* will be converted into a *Centrifugal* Force. In like Manner it appears in the ſmall Particles of Matter, that at *one* Diſtance they act on one another by the Law of Gravitation; at *another* Diſtance, by the Law of *Cohæſion*, (which may alſo be called a particular Attraction, when they come to be within each others Spheres;) and by that of *Repulſion* or flying from one another, when by *Fermentation* or Heat ſuch Particles are emitted from ſolid Bodies. Theſe are no Hypotheſes or Fictions, invented to ſolve the Phænomena of Nature, but they are real Laws of Motion, by which material Bodies are governed; and they are as nicely and exactly obſerved in the moſt minute Particles with regard to each other, as they are in the greater Bodies of the Univerſe. Theſe Particles compoſe a System; and approach to, and recede from each other in regular Curves; as is moſt evident in Experiments of Rays of Light, which are reflected and inflected by Bodies, and tranſmitted through them, in as uniform Curves as thoſe in which the Planets move about the Sun. The ſame may be affirmed alſo of Air and Vapours; as is clear from the Manner of the Production of them, *viz.* by Heat and Fermentation: for ^u the Particles are by this Means forced off from Bodies with great Violence; and conſequently as ſoon as they are beyond the Sphere of Activity of the attractive Body, they fly off, both from It, and from each other, with a proportionable Velocity. And as all the Irregularities of the greater Bodies of the Univerſe were either *viſual* or *optical*, or elſe ſuch as were naturally effected by thoſe Powers which were originally impreſſed on them, or by the Interpoſition of other Bodies, which a little diſturbed them; ſo here likewise the preſent Irregularities of the Air ariſe from the ſame Principle, and, ſo far as we have Means of coming to the Knowledge of the particular Circumſtances of it, we can account for the Event.

THUS, it is objected againſt our Air, That it is ſubject to frequent Storms and Hurricanes of Wind, to Thundrings, and Lightnings, which are often deſtructive both to Men and other Animals, and by which the Fruits of the Earth are blaſted; and it is many Times ſo infectious and corrupt, as to cauſe Plagues and Famines, by which whole Cities and Countries are depopulated and laid waſte. *Objections concerning the Air.*

IN order to account for the Origin of theſe Evils and Calamities, it will be neceſſary here alſo to enquire into the Nature and Conſtitution of the Air, ſo far as we have Means of coming to the Knowledge of it; that we may be able to judge of its Powers and Effects, and to ſee how much is owing to the Laws it is ſubject to, and how much is to be aſcribed to the Neglect or Careleſneſs, of Men. *The Nature of Air and the Laws it is ſubject to.* That Air is not by any Means to be rendred viſible, is evident from hence; that when it is never ſo much condensed by artificially thruſting a very great quantity into a ſmall Space, there appears not the leaſt difference in the Transparency. We cannot therefore by Sight come to the knowledge of its Laws, as we do of the

[†] Quæ tam ingens contractio & expansio, animo ſane concipi vix poteſt, ſi particulæ aeris fingantur elæſticæ & ramoſæ, vel viminum lentorum intra ſe in circulos intortorum inſtar eſſe, vel ulla alia ratione, niſi ita ſi vim repellentem habent, qua a ſe mutuo fugiant. *Newt. Optic. pag. 403.*

^u Nam particulæ e corporibus excuſſæ per calorem vel fermentationem, ſimul ac e ſphæra attractionis corporis ſui evaſerint recedunt deinceps & ab illo & a ſe invicem magna cum vi, ruſumque accedere fugiunt. *Newt. Optic. pag. 402.*

Clarke. great and visible Bodies; but there are numberless Experiments by which the general Nature of it is made manifest, and which will account for the principal Effects of it. The peculiar and distinguishing Property of Air, is its *Elasticity* or *Springiness*, that Power by which the Parts endeavour to recede from one another, and to expand themselves all round, so as to possess any given Space; the Degree of which is found by the Force that is required to compress it, Action and Reaction being always equal to each other. This also is a certain and positive Law, by which these minute, and to us invisible Particles of the Air, are as regularly governed as the heavenly Bodies themselves. And by considering what the Consequence of such a particular Motion is, we shall see the vast Use and Benefit of it, and what Imperfections and Disadvantages it must be liable to. Though this Springiness be the peculiar Quality which belongs to it as *Air*, yet is it also subject to that universal Law of Gravitation, which belongs to all material Things under every Form and Constitution, and 'tis no Way inconsistent with it; this *latter* always respecting the Center of the Earth, and the *other* respecting only the Particles themselves. And to the Composition of these two Motions, is owing that particular Density of the Air here near the Surface of the Earth, which is necessary for the Subsistence of Men, and all other Animals. Were its Particles void of Gravitation, they would immediately fly off, with a Velocity proportionable to their Compression, and be entirely dissipated; and were they void of Elasticity they would subside to the Surface of the Earth; but the Quantity of the Air being exactly adjusted to this *expanding* Force, so that the incumbent Weight might compress it to a due Density, this renders it fit for all the Purposes for which it was intended. That this is the general Constitution of the Air, is confirmed by undeniable Experiments; which accurately measure its particular different Density, in different Places; and demonstrate, that about the height of seven Miles from the Earth, it is four times thinner than upon its Superficies; and at the height of thirty-five Miles, it is above a thousand times more rare than with us. Which plainly discovers the particular *Uses* of this Element.

The particular Uses of this Element.

Thus, by the smallness of its Particles and their regular Distance from each other, the Air is rendered a transparent Medium; which it was very necessary it should be, that Objects might become visible; otherwise the Faculty of Seeing in all Kinds of Animals had been wholly lost; They would have been in utter Darkness, and been liable to rush continually against each other, when they moved out of their Places. By the *Elasticity* or *Springiness* of these Particles, whereby they endeavour to recede from each other all Ways, the Air is rendered the most proper Medium for all Creatures to move most freely in: For by this Means it is not only *fluid*, that is, will very easily yield to any Force, and by such yielding, have its Parts freely moved amongst one another; but by its Reaction, the incumbent Weight, (which is very great, sufficient to compress the Bodies and Vessels of all Animals, so as no Juices could circulate in them,) is so far taken off, that they can, with little Resistance, move swift enough for all the Purposes of Life. From the same Principle arises *Sound*, which is nothing else but the Effect of different Vibrations of the Air, striking upon the Organs of Hearing: Which affords not only the pleasure of Musick, but is the great Instrument of conveying Mens Thoughts to each other. To *this* also is owing That other Kind of Motion which we call *Wind*; which is so necessary towards the duly tempering and mixing the Particles interspersed in the Air; also for conveying the Clouds from one place to another, and for cooling the Air in the hotter Climates of the Earth. To which we may add its *artificial* Uses and Improvements by Men; as in the Art of Navigation; by which we are acquainted and traffick with the most distant Nations. Also the several Sorts of *Mills* and the like, which diminish very much that Labour which must otherwise come upon Men and other Animals. But the principal Use of all, is Respiration, which is absolutely necessary to the preservation of Life both *Animal* and *Vegetative*; for the Particles of Air insinuate themselves not only into the Vessels, but also mix with the Juices contained in them, in all living Things; whence through its equal pressure on every side, the distractile Vessels are capable of being contracted and

and dilated with great Ease by the *vital* Power, so as to inspire and expire a sufficient Quantity of Air to carry on the Circulation. That this Air is impregnated with *acid* Particles, or abounds with *acid* Vapours, is evident from Experience: The Nature of which Particles, or the Laws they are subject to, we judge by the Effect. Thus that they are the Cause of *Fermentation*, is evident from hence, that some Metals, such as Iron and Copper, when they are exposed in the Air, immediately contract a Rust; and that a common Fire is very much increased by blowing, or mixing a great Quantity of Air with it. From whence it follows, that these Particles must be pretty gross, and endued with a very strong attractive Force, when they come near one another; by which Force, when they rush together in any Fluid, they agitate the Parts of it, which causes *Heat*; or separate them with great Violence from each other, in which consists *Fermentation*. And thus the Pulse of the Heart, and the Circulation of Juices, is preserved by Respiration; for, upon dilating the Lungs, a great Quantity of Air is received in, which carries along with it those nitrous acid Particles with which it abounds; which being thus conveyed into the small distended Vessels, mix with the Fluids contained in them, and, by *fermenting* there, cause such a gentle Heat and Motion as is necessary to preserve Life.

THESE are the principal Laws by which this Medium is governed; which it was necessary to mention particularly, in order to account for those *Irregularities* which by this Means it must be continually liable to, and which, compared with the general *Usefulness* of it, will be found to be no just Objection against it. That * the Air is supplied with nitrous and sulphureous Particles from the internal Parts of the Earth, is evident, if we consider what a vast Quantity of them is contained in its Bowels; which discover themselves in the several burning Mountains, in hot and suffocating Exhalations, some of which are easily inflammable, and also in hot Fountains and the like. These Caverns are the Magazines of such Particles, as the Sea is of the Water; and they are conveyed from them all over the Surface of the Earth, much in the same Manner as Water is; for upon their mixing with Minerals, a *Fermentation* is immediately raised, which dissipates them so that they are exhaled along with the watry Vapours, and driven by the Wind from one Place to another, till the whole Atmosphere is impregnated with them. And as in the Instance of the Sea, so great a Quantity of Water, which yet is absolutely necessary to furnish the Earth with Rain and Rivers, must sometimes be subject, by the Laws of it, to overflow its Banks, and so cause Inundations and Deluges, by which particular Countries are injured; so *here* also, under some Circumstances, these *Fermentations*, which in the general are no more than is requisite to fill the Air sufficiently for the Purposes of Life, must cause great Mischief in certain Places.

THUS the internal Parts of the Earth being the only proper Place for containing so large a Store of Sulphur and Nitre and Minerals as is required for so many thousand Years as this Earth in its present State has continued, and may yet continue; it must necessarily be, that when this *Fermentation* is made in such subterraneous Caverns as are not wide enough for the Particles to expand themselves in, or have no open Passage to rush out at, they will, by the forementioned Law, shake the Earth to a considerable Distance, tear those Caverns to Pieces, and, according to the Depth of such Caverns or Quantity of Materials contained in them, remove large Pieces of the Surface of the Earth from one Place to another; in the same Manner, though to a much higher Degree, than *artificial* Explosions made under-ground; the Effect of which is very sensible to a great Distance. If it happens that these *Fermentations* are in Places under the Sea, the Water mixing with these Materials increases their Force, and is thereby thrown back with great Violence; so as to seem to rise up into the Clouds and fall down again, sometimes in very large Drops, and sometimes in whole Spouts, which are sufficient to drown all that is near them. If the *Fermentation* be not so violent, but such only as raise

* Si eodem tempore consideremus quam multum sit Sulphuris intra Terram, & quam calidæ sint partes interiores Terræ; Fontesque fervidos contemplemur, Montesque ardentes, Mephitisque subter Terram subitaneas, & Vapores inflammabiles, Coruscationes Metallicas, Terræ motus, Exhalationes æstuosas & suffocantes, Ventorum turbines, immanesque Aquæ marinæ in Cælum usque elatos & contortos Vortices; utique intelligere poterimus &c. *Newt. Optic. p. 384.*

Clarke. large Vapours or Steams, which can find their Way through small occult Passages of the Earth; *these* near its Surface, by their continual Expirations are at first the Cause of gentle Winds; and these afterwards by their continual Increase become perhaps Storms and Whirlwinds and Tempests, which many Times destroy the Fruits, tear up the Trees, and overthrow the Houses: But if they be still more gentle, there being always some sulphureous Exhalations, especially if the Earth be dry, they then ascend along with the lighter Vapours into the upper Region of the Air, where, when a large Quantity of them is gathered together, they *ferment* with the acid Nitre, and taking Fire, and exploding, cause Thunder and Lightning and other Meteors. This, as far as can be gathered from Experience and Observation of the Works of Nature, is the Origin and Cause of those *Imperfections* and *Evils* which the present Constitution of the Air, and the Laws of Motion observed by those Particles mixed with it, unavoidably subject it to. They are the natural and genuine Effects of the *Regulation* it is under; and without altering the primary Laws of it, (that is, making it something else than what it is, or changing it into another Form; the Result of which, would be only to render it liable to *Evils* of another Kind, against which the same Objections would equally lye;) or in a supernatural Manner hindering it from producing such Effects, it is impossible to prevent them. And if we add to this, that these *Evils* are the fewest that in the Nature of Things could be, without hindering a much greater *good*; that they are in the most convenient Parts, and the most guarded against doing Mischief, that could be; and that there are also good Uses to be made of them; we shall have no Reason to complain of, or find fault with them. Were the Quantity of Sulphur and Nitre much diminished, there would not be sufficient to fill the Region of the Air for the Purposes of Vegetation and Life; but the Ground would grow barren, and the Plants and Animals would waste and die: And if there were a much greater Quantity, the contrary Effect would happen; the Earth would be too fat, the Plants would grow too gross, and the Animals would be suffocated and choaked. The Temperature is therefore as exact as it could be, all Circumstances considered; and the small Inconveniences are nothing, compared with the general *Good*. Those Vapours which cause Thunder and Lightning, are by their Levity conveyed to the highest and most remote Parts of the Atmosphere; where, their Explosion being capable of any Direction, it seldom comes *perpendicular* on the Earth, and more seldom reaches it, by Reason of the greater Density of the Air near its Surface: And were these Vapours not to be discharged in this Manner, the Air would be so filled with them, as to be more *pernicious* to Men and all other Creatures: They are therefore of very great *Use* towards purging and purifying the Air from noxious Steams and Exhalations, and the like. The same may be said also of Storms and Hurricanes of Wind: The Case of the Air, is much the same as that of the Sea; if the Water stagnates but a few Days, it corrupts and stinks: So likewise if the Air stagnates, it corrupts and becomes unwholesome, in a short Time; so that it was necessary there should be Storms of Wind to agitate its Particles, and to give them a due Mixture. So likewise concerning Vulcano's and the like; they are of Use to generate Mountains and Islands, and to enrich the Countries round about them; for we observe them to be generally in the most fertile Places, the Materials with which they abound being proper for this Purpose. Thus we see that these *Imperfections* and *Evils*, which this Part of the Creation is by the general Laws of Nature subject to, is by no Means inconsistent with what *Moses* pronounces concerning all the Parts of it; *That behold they are very good*. And therefore in Scripture these very Things are often in particular mentioned, not as unworthy of the Perfections of God; but as Manifestations of his Glory and Excellency; according to that of the Royal Psalmist, *Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he in Heaven and in the Earth, in the Seas and all deep Places. He causeth the Vapours to ascend from the Ends of the Earth; He maketh Lightnings for the Rain; He bringeth the Wind out of his Treasuries*, (Ps. cxxxv. 6, 7.) *Therefore praise the Lord, for the Lord is good: Sing Praises unto his Name, for it is pleasant*, &c. 3. And again, (Ps. xxix. 3, 4.) *It is the Lord that commandeth the Waters; it is the glorious God that maketh the Thunder;*

Thunder ; it is the Lord that ruleth the Sea, the Voice of the Lord is mighty in Clarke. Operation, the Voice of the Lord is a glorious Voice. ~~~~~

THE remaining Part of the Objection is, that this Air is many Times so corrupted and infectious, as to cause Plagues and Famines, by which whole Countries have in great Measure been depopulated and destroyed. *The Ob-
jection
concerning
Plagues
and Fa-
mines con-
sidered.* These may be partly ascribed to the natural Imperfections of Things, and partly to the voluntary Neglect of Men. It was before observed, that a due Temperature of the Air is necessary to the Vegetation of Plants and Respiration of Animals; whence it follows, that if this Temperature be disturbed any Way, some proportionable Inconvenience must arise. If the Air abounds with too many nitrous and sulphureous Particles, the Consequence is, that the *Fermentation* will be also too great, so as to accelerate the Juices and distend the Vessels more than is proper for the Nourishment either of Plants or Animals; or if it be still more violent, it may break them in Pieces: Or, on the other Hand, the Air may want a sufficient Quantity of such Particles, and then the *Fermentation* may not be great enough to promote a due Circulation of those Juices; but the Motion may grow languid, or at last the Juices may quite stagnate. In either of which Cases, Diseases and Death will unavoidably follow. And these Evils come to pass naturally, according to the forementioned Laws: For at the first Eruption of such Vapours, the adjacent Places must needs be too plentifully stored with them, so as by their excessive Heat and Intenseness to destroy the Products of the Earth; and afterwards by continually decreasing, and in the End being wholly spent, the very same Places may become barren and desolate. But this may be ascribed likewise in some Measure to the voluntary Neglect of Men: The Earth being created principally for the Habitation of Man, there is a very strict Connexion and Proportion betwixt them, in order to render the Earth the most useful and serviceable: And an Excess on either Hand, viz. when there is too many or too few Inhabitants, may produce the Effects here complained of. In barren and desert Countries, where the Ground is uncultivated, and the Waters permitted to stagnate, and where very large Woods which the Wind cannot penetrate, make the Air to stagnate also; the Earth sends forth noxious Steams and corrupted Vapours, which being carried along by the Wind, infect the neighbouring Nations. And in very populous and close-built Cities, the contrary Effect is produced, for want of a due Circulation of Air, and for want of its being proportionably impregnated with fermenting Particles. Whence it is observed that such Distempers are for the most Part generated, in one or other of these extremely different Places. These are the principal Causes of the forementioned Evils, which this Medium of the Air is subject to; and from the Composition and Variety of them arise different Sorts and Degrees which must be accounted for by particular Observation and Experience; it being impossible for us otherwise to find out the Ingredients of which such Mixtures are compounded, the Cases being almost infinite. But the Uniformity we every where see in Nature, is a sufficient Reason to ascribe the same Kind of Effects to the same general Cause.

HAVING thus considered the Nature and Effects of the Air, I come now to the next Part of the Creation, according to the Division of Moses, (*Gen. 1.*) viz. the Herbs and Plants with which the Surface of the Earth abounds; of these it is said, (*Y 12.*) *That the Earth brought forth Grass and Herb yielding Seed after his Kind, and the Tree yielding Fruit, whose Seed was in itself after his Kind; and God saw that it was good.* To which it is objected, that many of these are noxious and poisonous to Men and other Creatures, and others of them are said to be a Curse rather than a Blessing, (*Ch. iii. Y 17.*) *Cursed is the Ground for thy sake; — Thorns and Thistles shall it bring forth unto thee.* That the principal of these, such as the different Sorts of Corn and other Grain, were chiefly designed for the Use and Benefit of Men, is evident in that they are the most agreeable Food for them: But as the All-wise Creator thought fit to make Variety of other inferior Creatures, it was necessary that they also should be supplied with such Kind of Sustenance as was proper for them. Wherefore, as the Royal Psalmist expresses it, *He causeth the Grass to grow for the Cattle, and Herb for the Service of Men, that he may* *bring* *Pf. civ. 14.*

Clarke. *bring forth Food out of the Earth, and Wine that maketh glad the Heart of Man, and Oyl to make his Face to shine, and Bread which strengtheneth Man's Heart.* The natural Consequence of which is, that as every Species of Creatures has its proper Food, is endued with peculiar Degrees of Sight, or Taste, or Smell, in order to distinguish it from all others; as they have their Mouths and Teeth framed so as most easily to take the Food and render it fit for the Stomach, and such Juices in the Stomach as will best digest it into Nourishment; it must, I say, from hence follow in the Course of Things, that any Defect or Misapplication, or Superabundance of *these*, must be injurious or noxious, whenever it happens which yet casts no reflexion upon the general *Good*. And hence it is, that what is Food and preserves Life in one Animal, may be Poison and Death to another; because its Stomach may not be at all able to digest it; or it may do it in such a Manner, as to cause a Fermentation too strong or too weak for the Vessels in which the Juices are contained; the several Degrees, or different Varieties of which, cause greater or less Disorders and Irregularities. There is no Fault or Defect in the Things themselves; they are the most useful that they were capable of being made; and 'tis merely the Names we give to them, on the Account of those disagreeable Effects they produce when out of their natural State, that makes them seem to be *evil*, when the contrary ought to be affirmed of them, and often is so in another View. Thus the same Plant which in some Respects, and under some Circumstances is styled *poisonous*, is in other Respects and under other Circumstances very excellent and useful: It is perhaps a Remedy for many Distempers, or, according as the Body is disposed, perhaps a proper Diet. Before we peremptorily pronounce concerning the *Good* or *Evil* of such Products of the Earth, we ought to find what are the Ends and Uses of them; for till this be done, we cannot truly determine about them. Now in those that we do know, they appear sufficiently to answer the Design of the great Creator, and are therefore *good*. And as the *other* may do so too, for ought we know; nay, from the Analogy of Things and their proceeding from the same Original, they cannot but do so; they are not only, not *Evil*, but *Good* likewise. And what is said of the Ground's being cursed, and bringing forth Thorns and Thistles, is no Objection against this general Truth: For those Words seem only to be comparatively spoken; and relate to the Garden of *Eden*, out of which our first Parents were removed for their Transgression, and on whose Account that pleasant Place was levelled with the common Earth, and brought forth Thorns and Thistles, instead of those choice Fruits it was replenished with before; and therefore with regard to them it is said to be *cursed*, that is, *less blessed*; for Thorns and Thistles have their Uses in bringing forth Food for Birds and the like. And in this comparative Sense *blessing* and *curfing*, *loving* and *hating* are frequently used in Scripture.

The general Application of the foregoing Particulars.

THUS we have gone through the *inanimate* Part of the Creation, and have distinctly considered the principal Instances which have been thought most liable to Objection; and have given such Answers to them as the Nature of the Things afforded. It is impossible to take in every Particular, under all its Variety of Circumstances, because they are innumerable; but as the same Reason holds for all, it is easy to apply the general Rule. That every Thing which exists, was created for some *End* and *Purpose*; that it is regulated by some *Law*, or endued with some *Faculty* in its own Nature most proper and conducive to attain that particular *End* and *Purpose*; this we come to the Knowledge of, by Experience and Observation, and by an Induction of Particulars: For this is the only Way we can arrive at any Knowledge of this Kind, *viz.* to make Observation in all the Instances where we have Means of doing it, and, where the Analogy is the same, to apply it to those Things that we cannot come at; and then by abstracting, form a general Rule *a priori*, from which we may safely argue afterwards. Thus, that all Bodies *gravitate* towards each other, we find by Experience, in all Instances that we have had any Opportunity of trying; from whence we make no Scruple to affirm, that if any different Sorts of Bodies which we had never seen, were brought from other Countries or out of the Bowels of the Earth; I say, we should not scruple to affirm, that *These* also were *heavy* in

in Proportion to the Quantity of Matter contained in them: And so we may proceed till we have made it a general Law of Nature; after which we may argue *a priori*, and venture to determine what particular Effects will be produced by a System of Bodies acting upon one another in this Manner. So likewise, that those Things which we are more immediately conversant with, and have Opportunities of knowing the Circumstances and Condition of, have their peculiar *Ends* and *Uses*; is too obvious to be doubted by any serious Person. As, that the Eye was made to see with, and the Ear to hear with; that Corn was made to grow for the Service of Man in furnishing him with Bread the Staff of Life, and Grass in the same manner for Food for the Cattle: That *other* Things which at first were thought to be wholly useless, have by Experience been found, upon removing them out of their Places, to be very necessary; and those with which they were invisibly connected, to suffer by it; and others which were thought really injurious, have upon more strict Observation and Inquiry, been found to be very beneficial and serviceable; as Seas, Mountains, Vulcanoes and the like. We may reasonably from hence conclude also, that *every* Thing has its proper Use, and is therefore *good* in the Place originally intended for it. Wherefore since we can find no Instance to the contrary, in those Things that we have Means of coming to the Knowledge of, which appear to be the *best* that it is possible for us to conceive, in their several Degrees and Orders; and since, where we have not such Opportunities of Knowledge, we may justly infer the same, because the whole System of Nature is uniform, and the further we inquire into it, the Beauty and Order of it appears more and more; this ought to be satisfactory, unless it could be made appear that any Part of the Creation is in every respect *useless*; which it is impossible to do, because we cannot tell all the Ways that it may be applied, and such Ignorance is no Argument against the Excellency of the Thing. And this is the only Way we can have of judging of the Works of the Creation, which are so numerous, have so strict a Connection with each other, and are capable of so much Variation. And as we have just Reason to think, that every even the most minute *Thing* in the Creation, was made for some *End* or *Use*, though very different in Degree, which renders them *better* or *worse* relatively, but upon the whole, and in their proper Places, they are all *equally good*; so is it likewise evident that they are subject to such *Laws*, or endued with such *Powers* and *Properties*, as are most conducive to attain those *Ends*. This is demonstrable, not only of the greater Bodies of the Universe, but also of Those which seem to us the most inconsiderable: The meanest *Weed* that grows in the most barren Field, if viewed in a Microscope, affords sufficient Matter of Admiration; to see the Texture of its smallest Particles, and the nice Adjustment of all its Fibres and Vessels, in order to bring it to a State of Maturity. And the same may be affirmed of the least Grain of Sand; and of the still smaller Particles of Matter, which are to us utterly invisible; as is evident from the Effects. The different Rays of Light, could not excite in us different Colours; nor the different Vibrations of Air, raise in us as different Sounds, in the most exact Proportion; if the component Particles of the Bodies from whence they proceed, and the Medium through which they pass, and the Organ of Sensation which receives them, were not all regulated and connected, in the most exact Manner possible. So that what our Saviour says in this Case, is literally true, *That God cloaths the* Luke xii. 28. *Grass of the Field; that a Bird falls not to the Ground without him; and that the very Hairs of our Head are all numbred; that is, they are all of them under the Direction of him who governs them by the wisest and best Laws which the Nature of the Things are capable of. And this leads us to the Cause and Origin of all those natural Evils which have been before mentioned, viz. that Things are not under an unavoidable Necessity, but are directed by certain Laws; the natural Consequence of which is, that as different Sorts of Bodies are subject to different Laws, are endued with different Powers and Qualities, some of which are much superior to and stronger than others; so they must sometimes interfere with each other, and produce many Irregularities, which are the natural Effects of such different Compositions. Were all Things under a fatal Necessity, and unalterably*

Clarke. terably determined in their Course; there would then be no such Thing as *Good* or *Evil*, *Perfection* or *Imperfection*: But the infinite Variety we observe in the Universe, is a Demonstration against such *Necessity*; which vanishes upon the very Supposition of any *Change* or *Alteration*. But every Thing being subject to different *Laws* or *Rules*; this is the Foundation of all those Inconveniencies complained of: And this was not possible in the Nature of Things to be prevented: There could have been no Degrees or Ranks of Creatures; there could have been no Order or Harmony in the World, without such Differences. The whole therefore is reduced to this, either that there must be no created Beings at all, or they must be liable to some *Evils* or other of this Kind. Let the Supposition be what it will, it amounts to the same. Whatever is created, is *finite*, and therefore if compared with any other created Thing of a different Kind, is relatively *better* or *worse*; and if they have any Connexion with each other, they cannot but produce Changes and Alterations, which are what we call *Good* or *Evil*. All that is reasonably to be expected, or agreeable to the Notions we have of Wisdom, is, that there should be Variety in the Works of the Creation; that every Part should be as perfect as it can be in its Place; that they should all be subservient to one another, and promote the Good of the whole. And if the unavoidable Consequence of this be, that some small Defects and seeming Irregularities will arise, *these* when compared with the general Use, will be found scarce worth taking Notice of. This is evidently the Case in all the foregoing Instances: They are such only as are the natural Result of being governed by particular stated Laws, which in themselves are originally perfectly indifferent, and are accommodated to serve the Business of this System in the best Manner possible. And to suppose the entire Absence of such Evils or Imperfections, is wholly inconsistent with the Notion of any created Beings at all, is introducing Fate or Necessity, is to suppose the same Cause sometimes producing its genuine Effects, and sometimes not, without any Thing to hinder it; or else to imagine the uniform Laws of the Creation should be perpetually altered or suspended without any sufficient Reason. It is much more agreeable to the Notions we have of Wisdom in general, and to what we know of the present Circumstances of the Creation from Observation and Fact; to think, that every the most minute Part of the Universe is governed by a certain Law which tends to the Good of the whole, and that every *Evil* or *Irregularity* is the natural Result of this, under particular Circumstances, and is of small Moment compared with the general Good, and consequently no reasonable Objection. Thus in the greater Bodies of the Universe, the Law of Gravitation is absolutely necessary, in order to their revolving in their several Orbits; the natural Consequence of which is, that by their mutual acting upon each other, some small Irregularities must happen, by accelerating or retarding their Motions, altering the Figure of their Orbits, and the like; which perhaps in very long Time may come to be so considerable as to want putting into better Order. But this is of no Weight against the present State of them: They now serve the Purposes for which they were originally intended, in the best Manner possible; these Irregularities are scarce worth taking any Notice of; it will be a very long Time before they can make any great Change; which when it does come to pass, they will have endured as long as the Creator and Governor of them thought fit, to answer the End he designed. And as they were not ^v at first created by the Laws by which they are now preserved (for we know none of the mere Laws of Nature, no mechanick Principles that could put the Planets all pretty near in the same Plain, that could incline their Axes to that Plain, or that could revolve them about such Axes;) so the same Being who at first disposed and ordered them in this Manner, may again restore them to the same State, or make use of them to other Purposes, according to his own Will and Pleasure. So likewise with Respect to this Earth in particular, and its Attendant the Moon; the natural Consequence of the present Inclinations of their

^v Quæ si vera rerum origo fuit; jam indignum erit Philosopho, alias Mundi condendi rationes exquirere, vel comminisci quemadmodum è Chao per meras leges Naturæ mundus universus oriri potuerit; quamvis, formatus cum sit, possit is jam per istas Leges in multa quidem secula perdurare. *Newt. Opt. pag. 410.*

Orbs to each other, is, that there must sometimes happen Eclipses both of the Sun *Clarke.* and Moon, which now and then deprive us of their whole Light; yet no considerate Person can think it reasonable to expect, that the Course of Things should be altered, or a Miracle worked, to prevent the Interposition of those Luminaries, on account of some Inconveniences that may befall some Part of Mankind, through Fear, Ignorance or Superstition. And if we go yet further, to the Materials of which the Earth is composed, and take any *One* of them, suppose that useful Metal Iron, to which single Thing is owing the Improvement of all Arts and Sciences; it is no real Objection against it, that it will make *Swords* as well as *Plowshares*, and *Spears* as well as *pruning Hooks*, and consequently that Men may convert *that* which was intended for their greatest Benefit, to the Destruction of each other. And the same will hold in Proportion, in every Instance throughout the whole Creation. If there be any *Ends* proposed in the several Parts of it, if there be any *Means* proper to obtain those *Ends*, if there be any particular *Circumstances* and *Condition*, more conducive thereto than others; it must from thence unavoidably follow, from the Nature of material Things, and the Laws which they are capable of, that they are liable to be disturbed and interrupted; the Circumstances they are under, may be altered by the Interposition of other Beings; and their regular Effects thereby hindered. And hence it is, that the more *useful* any Thing is, that is, the more Purposes it can be applied to; the more capable is it of being abused: Because in every Instance in which it can be applied, it can be also misapplied. The true Notion of *Good* therefore in the natural World is, not that the Parts of it should be so made as to be incapable of any Change or Alteration, for this the Nature of Things will not permit; but that every Part should serve some End, and consequently should be endued with such particular Powers, and in such a certain Degree, as is most proper to attain that End. And in this Sense it is, that every Thing which God has made, is *good*; that the most minute and inconsiderable Part of the Creation, serves the Purpose for which it was intended, as well as the greatest and most magnificent One does in its Place. And whenever the Word *Evil* is applyed to any of Them, it is only comparatively; which means nothing else, but that they are more or less *perfect*, which is not any real Fault: Or else it arises from our Ignorance or wrong Notions concerning the Things themselves; when we imagine they should have been endued with other Powers or Qualities than those we find in them, or think they were made for one Purpose, when they were really intended for another very different. Upon the whole, the State of the Matter seems to be reducible to this: There is great *Variety* in the material World, which is the natural Result of the different Figure and Texture and Motion of the original Particles of which it is constituted: Thus Air, Water, Earth, Stones, Minerals and the like, are only different Compositions and Modifications of the same Matter. There is also a manifest *Fitness* in every one of *These*, to their proper and respective *Ends*: The necessary Consequence of which is, that where they are rightly and duly adjusted, there is Order and Beauty and Harmony; and where they are unconnected or misapplied, there Disorder and Confusion and Deformity immediately ensues. If the Air were put where the Water is, all the Creatures which live in that Element would be destroyed; and if the Water took the Place of the Air, all the Plants and Animals on the Earth would be destroyed: And the same holds true of every Particular contained in them. To suppose therefore that there should be no *Possibility* of *natural Evil*, is also to take away all *Possibility* of *natural Good*, and to overthrow the essential Differences of Things: And to suppose that there should be no natural Evil *actually* existing, is to take away all *Liberty* and *Intelligence*, or, which amounts to the same Thing, to suppose that there are no certain Laws by which any Thing is governed, but the whole left to Chance or Fate. The contrary to all which, is most apparent in every Instance throughout the whole Creation. There are all the Tokens that can be conceived, of every thing's being adapted to a peculiar Use and Purpose; which if they do not attain, it is manifestly owing to the Interposition of some other Thing of superiour Force; or to the Actions of Men, or inferiour Animals. This is the present State of Things,

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Clarke. and the genuine Effect of that Connection and Dependance which they have upon each other. How long they have continued, or may yet continue in this State, we have no natural Means of knowing, nor of what may arise from any new Laws given to them; they are resolvable into their original Principles, and then capable of an infinite Variety of new Forms. Thus the Earth was at first formed out of a Chaos, and may be reduced to a Chaos again, out of which a new and very different *one* may arise.

*The true
Ground of
all these
Kind of
Objections.*

Thus we see the Folly and Weakness of condemning the Works of the Creation; even the meanest and most inferior Parts of it. The Ground of which, seems principally to be this; that we are apt to consider Things *separately* without taking in the Relation or Connexion they have with other Things, of which they are truly Parts, and then to imagine that they might have been *better*, because, taken abstractly, they are capable of other Powers or Qualities: Whereas the true Way for us to gain a right Notion of them, is to examine and find out what End or Purpose they were designed for, and see if they are not adapted in the best Manner possible to attain it. Or else, which is still worse, we are apt to take the wrong side; to magnify what we think to be Faults or Irregularities, without considering how much *Good* or *Benefit* is so closely connected with them, that upon taking away the *one*, the *other* would immediately cease too: Whereas they ought to be weighed in a just Ballance, and then the *Good* will be found vastly to outweigh the *Evil*. To these we may add, that of those Parts of the Creation which were made for the Use and Service of Man, there is a great deal *designedly* left to exercise his Understanding and Industry. They are only Materials, which He is to find what they will best serve for, and to apply accordingly; and were it otherwise, there would be no Room for the Improvement of Arts and Sciences. Were every thing of this Kind brought into perfect Order, Man would be deprived of a great Part of the Pleasure of Life, which consists in perpetual Invention and Application; and he would quickly find the ill Effects of Indolence upon that *Body*, which was originally framed for Exercise and Labour. And as to those Parts of the Creation which are *noxious* either on the Account of the *Degree* or *Misapplication* of them, there is as much *Provision* made against them, and as many *Remedies* for them, as in the present State of Things they are capable of: Whence most of the forementioned natural *Evils*, are pretty well secured against, in those Places where they often happen: and obtain their Effects chiefly where they are very *rare*, and depend upon a Number of Circumstances not easily to be foreseen. In a Word; we may here use St. Paul's Comparison of a human Body, and apply it to the whole System of Nature, *For as the Body is one and hath many Members, and all the Members of that one Body, being many, are one Body*, so is it here; all the different Parts of the Creation, make but one System: *And as God has set the Members every one of them in the Body, as it has pleased him*; so has He also ordered and disposed every thing in the whole Universe as He thought fit. *And if they were all one Member, where were the Body?* It was necessary, in order to compose a humane Body, that there should be different Members, to which different Officers are allotted; the natural Consequence of which is, that *some* will be more, and *some* less honourable, some more and some less comely, and therefore that more abundant Honour should be given, in Proportion, to them. And the same Reason holds for the whole Frame of Nature. Were it one uniform Mass of Matter, there would be no Harmony, Order or Beauty in it. It was therefore necessary that it should consist of very different Parts, appointed to serve very different Ends. The unavoidable Consequence of which is, that there should be Degrees of Perfection, and more Care and Pains requisite in one thing than in another. And it is altogether as unreasonable to complain of such Diversity, and to condemn the meanest and least useful Parts (which are as necessary to the Good of the Whole, as the most excellent Ones,) as it is for the Foot to complain because it was not the Eye, or the Ear that it was not the Nose. By this Rule the whole Body should have been Eye or Ear, and by the same Rule the Universe should have been but *one* Thing. Such Objections therefore.

1 Cor. xiii.
12.

fore are very absurd, and tend directly to overturn the Beauty and Order of the whole Creation. Clarke.

LET us now come to the *Animal Part* of the Creation, and see if the Objections against That, be any stronger than the other. And under this Head, come in all Creatures endued with animal Life; not only Men, but all the Variety of Birds and Beasts and creeping Things; because in this respect they are all upon the Level, and all the Objections against them affect them all equally, viz. that they are subject to *Pain, Misery and Death*. In order to account for these *Evils*, it is necessary to consider the Materials of which the Bodies of such Creatures are originally composed, the Frame and Structure of them, the Powers and Qualities they are endued with, and the like; that we may be able to form a true Judgment of them, and see what is reasonable to be expected from such a Constitution, either as to its Duration, or the Effects which may be produced in it from Things without or within itself: In the same manner as we have done in the great Machine of the World, the Excellency and wonderful Contrivance of which appears in the most exact Connection and Adjustment of all its Parts, so as to be the most useful to each other. All that was here required in order to preserve this System, is only some few general Laws of Motion; which when once impressed on Matter, it is capable of retaining them for many Ages. But though this be sufficient to produce all those Effects which we observe in the material World; yet something more than this is necessary in the *Animal World*. The Principle of Life is vastly superiour to that of mere Motion; nay even *Vegetative Life*, such as all Plants are endued with. There is no such thing as *equivocal Generation* even in *These*; something further is requisite to the Production of Them, than the bare Heat of the Sun, or Moisture of the Earth, or any other mere natural Power. And therefore some of the ancient Philosophers thought there was an ^z universal *Plastick Nature*, by which every one of Them was thus formed. But modern Improvements in Philosophy, have sufficiently confirmed St. Paul's Assertion, *That God giveth them Bodies as it hath pleased him, and to every Seed its own Body*. Every Plant 1 Cor. xv. 38. has its peculiar Seed, which in some is so small as scarce to be discerned by the Senses; yet in so minute an Origin are contained the whole Stamina of the Vegetable; all its Vessels, Fibres and Fruit, folded up in the most artful and exquisite Manner: In order to the Production of which, it is necessary that they should be put into a proper Soil, where in due Season, the Rarefaction and Fermentation, caused by the gentle Heat of the Sun, so agitates the Parts as to break the *Capsula* in which they are contained; by which Means the Water, watry Tinctures, and Salts, have an Opportunity of penetrating the spongy and porous Fibres, and, insinuating themselves into the small Vessels, swell and distend them till a Circulation of Juices is performed through them all. In these Juices is conveyed proper Nourishment for the several different Parts, as the Bark, Leaves, Fruit and the like; which after it is separated by the proper Channels, is conveyed to every one of those Parts, and easily converted into the same Form, or assimilated to them: For this Nourishment being moist or liquid, the Texture of it is quickly changed by a gentle Heat and Motion, till it be rendered *like* those dense, hard and durable Particles, of which the solid Parts of the Plant are composed; and then it unites with them. This is the Method of Accretion; and in this Manner do all Sorts of Herbs and Trees, the Parts of which are so various and different from each other, unfold and extend themselves to such a Magnitude. And much after the same Manner, are Animals likewise generated; as is evident in all Kinds of Birds, Beasts, Fishes and Insects, which are produced out of the forementioned Fluids: ^a and particularly in those Animals which arise from Eggs so small as scarce to be visible to the naked Eye, and yet gradually explicate themselves to a con-

^z Alii Naturam censent esse Vim quandam sine Ratione, cientem motus in corporibus necessarios; alii autem Vim participem Ordinis, tanquam via progredientem. Cuius Solertiam, nulla Ars, nulla Manus, nemo Opifex, consequi potest imitando; feminis enim Vim esse tantam, ut id quanquam perexiguum, nactumque sit Materiam qua ali augerique possit, ita fingat & efficiat, in suo quidque genere, partim ut per stirpes alantur suas, partim ut movere etiam possint, & ex se familia sui generare. *Tull. de Nat. Deor. Lib. II.*

^a Ova ex corporibus minoribus, quam ut sensu percipi queant, explicant se paulatim in magnitudinem, & in Animalia convertuntur: Gyrini in Ranas; vermiculi in Muscas. *Newt. Opt. p. 379.*

Clarke. considerable Bigness, and at length become living Creatures. Analogous to which is the Transformation of some Animals from one Species to another, as the Conversion of Tadpoles into Frogs, and Maggots into Flies. And as to the Formation of Man, which with Respect to his animal Part, is not much different from that of inferior Creatures; we have in the second Chapter of *Genesis*, *§ 7.* a short Account of the Original of it, *viz. That the Lord God formed Man of the Dust of the Ground, and breathed into his Nostrils the Breath of Life, and Man became a living Soul.* In this Description, it is evident that Man is considered only as an animated Body, a Creature endued with Life and Sensation; and so St. Paul explains it, *the first Man Adam was made a living Soul, the last Adam was made a quickning Spirit.* Where, by the Opposition of *living Soul* to *quicken Spirit*, it is manifest that the former signifies only the present State of Life; depending upon the Laws of the Creation. Now, in order to judge of the *Perfection* of such a Creature, and what *Evils* or *Inconveniences* he must be obnoxious to; we must distinctly consider the constituent Parts of him, what Powers or Qualities they are each of them endued with, and what Connexion and Dependence they have on one another. The Body, though it be formed out of the Dust of the Earth, yet, as the Royal Psalmist expresses it, *It is fearfully and wonderfully made.* Every Member hath its proper Use and Office, and is most admirably contrived both for Beauty, Position and Constitution of its Parts, so as with the greatest Ease they execute their respective Functions. This is obvious to the meanest Capacity, in the Eye and Ear and other Organs of Sensation; and to those who are more curious in enquiring into the animal Oeconomy, the late Improvements in Anatomy have sufficiently discovered the *Use* of all the Arteries, Veins, Muscles, Nerves, &c. in order to preserve and maintain the Structure of the Whole. Now the Case is exactly the same here, as it is in the natural World. All finite Powers and Qualities can exert themselves but to a certain Degree; and as they are very different, so they must unavoidably in the present Circumstances of Things, sometimes interfere with and disturb each other. This could not possibly be prevented, if they be subject to any Laws at all. And to *this* must be ascribed all the natural *Evils* that the Bodies of Men are incident to, such as *Diseases, Pains* and *Death*.

Whence it
is that
Men and
all other
Animals
are subject
to Death.

Gen. ii.
17.

Psal. xc.
10.

THE Matter of which the Body is formed, is the Dust of the Earth, wherefore such as the *Materials* are, such of Necessity must the Fabrick be: In general it must be capable of Dissolution, or of being resolved into its original constituent Particles; because whatever the Composition be, it can be only the Result of the different Texture of such Particles, which Texture may be destroyed by any Power superior to those Laws by which it is regulated. Man therefore was originally made *mortal*. It is the Condition of humane Nature, or as the Author to the *Hebrews* expresses it, (*Ch. xix. § 27.*) *It is appointed unto Men once to dye.* God Almighty did not intend that they should continue in this State for ever, and therefore made their Bodies proportionable to that Duration which he thought proper for them. And this is very consistent with the Sanction of the Law given to our first Parents, *But of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the Day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.* This Threatning does not at all imply, but that in their State of Innocence they might have been mortal. Whether they should *actually* have died or no, if they had forborn to eat of this Tree; how long their Lives might have been here preserved by the Use of the Tree of Life, which seems to have been planted for that Purpose; or whether they might not have been removed to another State some other Way than by Death (of all which the Scripture is silent, and we have no natural Means of knowing;) which soever of these, I say, might have been, thus much is certain; that as they were taken out of the Ground, so into the Ground they were capable of returning; and as they were made of Dust, so into Dust they were capable of being dissolved also. But whatever the particular *Circumstances* of our first Parents were, 'tis evident what *those* are in which Mankind are at present. What the Royal Psalmist observed in his Time, we likewise Experience to be the same, *That the Days of our Years are threescore Years and ten; that*
this

this is the general Period of humane Life, and all that can be expected from the *Clarke.* Frame and Constitution of the Body, as it now is. For if we observe the Course and Order of Nature, we shall find, that throughout the whole Creation, this is the Method in which every Thing goes, from the lowest to the highest; they are converted and transformed from one Species to another, and then return to their Original again. Thus in the inanimate Part ^b, dense Bodies by Rarefaction are turned into Air; and this Air by Fermentation returns back again into dense Bodies. In the vegetative Part, all Kinds of Plants and Herbs grow out of watry Juices, and by Putrefaction return into those watry Juices again. And the same may be applied to Animals, and particularly to the Bodies of Men. Humane Bodies, as well as those of all other Animals, and of Plants, are compounded of very different Materials, fixed and volatile, fluid and solid; as appears by the Resolution of them into their constituent Parts; and they are nourished in the same Manner, *viz.* by Attraction. ^c For as a Sponge by Suction draws in Water; so the Glands in the Bodies of all Animals, draw different Juices out of the Blood, according to the particular Nature and Constitution of each of them. So long therefore as the Nourishment is proper to assimilate itself to the several Parts of the Body, as it approaches them in its several Channels; or so long as the solid Particles (suppose of ^d Salts, which are absolutely necessary to the Preservation of all Creatures,) retain their Form and Texture; so long *Life* is preserved and maintained. And when the Nourishment becomes unfit to assimilate; or the *saline* Particles (which towards the Center are very dense, and therefore capable of strongly attracting the Fluids to them,) lose their Power of Attraction, either by being divided into still less Particles, (as they may be by their watry Parts insinuating themselves into their Pores with a gentle Heat;) or else by having those watry Parts violently separated from them: In either of these Cases all their Motion will cease, and end in Corruption, Confusion and Death. And this is abundantly confirmed by Experience; in that every Thing which is corrupted or putrified, is of a black Colour; which shows that the component Particles are broken to Pieces, and reduced so small, as to be unable even to reflect the Rays of Light. Thus we see that *Death* or the Dissolution of the Body, is the necessary Consequence of those Laws by which it is framed and generated, and therefore is not in itself properly an *Evil*, any more than that Fabrick can be styled *ill*, the Materials or Manner of building of which would not permit it to last a thousand Years, nor was originally intended to continue half so long.

AND to the same Origin are to be ascribed all the *Diseases* and *Distempers* which Mankind and all inferior Animals are incident to. For if the *whole* be liable to Corruption and Dissolution; these very Parts, of which it is composed, must necessarily be so too. And if a particular Order or Disposition of those Parts, be requisite to preserve Health; whatever disturbs that Order and Disposition, immediately creates a Distemper; which if it be so violent as to destroy the Texture of any one of those Parts, it then becomes irrecoverable, and is a partial Death. Now there needs but a very small Observation of the several Members of the Body, to see how nicely they are framed and adjusted, so as most easily to perform their respective Offices; and how many Ways there are of disturbing that Frame and Adjustment. We may take, for Instance, the Eye or the Ear; the former fitted to receive the Impression of external Objects by Means of the Rays of Light, and the latter by Means of the Air; from whence arise those agreeable and useful Sensations of Light and Sound. With Regard to each of these, nothing can be more surprising than the curious Contrivance of them to effect what they were designed for. The Seat of Sensation is in the Brain: In order therefore to Perception,

Whence it is that they are liable to so many Diseases.

^b Corpora densa, fermentescendo rarefiunt in varia genera Aeris; & Aer iste fermentatione, nonnunquam etiam sine fermentatione, revertitur in corpora densa. — Aves omnes, Bestiæ, Pisces, Insecta, Arbores, & universum Herbarum genus, cum singulis suis inter se valde diversis partibus, accrescunt ex Aqua, & Tincturis aquosis & Salibus; eademque omnia putrescendo, revertuntur in Humores aquosos. *Newt. Optic. p. 379.*

^c Pari de causa, Spongia aquam suctu attrahit; & in Animalium corporibus Glandes, pro sua cujusque Natura ac Constitutione, Succos diversos sibi è Sanguine attrahunt. *Newt. Optic. pag. 398.*

^d Sir Isaac Newton compares a Particle of Salt to a Chaos, *viz.* as being dense, hard, dry and earthy towards the Center; and rare, soft, moist and watry towards the Superficies. Whence it is, that such Particles are so durable and require very great Force to dissolve them. Adeo ut Particula Salis, comparari queat quadantenus ad Chaos, &c. *Ibid. pag. 392.*

Clarke. it is necessary that the particular Motions excited by external Objects, should be conveyed thither ; which make different Impressions, or raise different Ideas in the Mind, as they are propagated by a different Medium, or through different Senses. Thus, to produce Vision, it is necessary that the Object be capable of reflecting Rays of Light, and that those Rays also should be capable of being reflected, that they may be thrown upon the Eye: And the same may be said of Refraction likewise, that they may meet to form the Image at the Bottom of the Eye. Hence it is that the Eye is composed of different Humours, having different Degrees of this Power proportioned to the Distance, from the *Retina* or Bottom of the Eye. It is also necessary that the Rays of Light should be very small, that they may freely pass through those Humours; yet that they should be of different Bigness and Shape, to excite different Sorts of Colours by their Vibrations. After this Manner the Images of external Objects are conveyed to the Bottom of the Eye, from whence they are carried along through the optick Nerve to the *Sensorium*, and are there taken Notice of by the Mind; in order to effect which, it is requisite also that these Vibrations should be continued along those Nerves, which are therefore compounded of solid, uniform and transparent Capillaments, containing a Medium proper for that Purpose. In the same Manner are Sounds likewise excited by the different Vibrations of the Air, in the same Proportion as those of Light; and carried to the *Sensorium* by the auditory Nerves. These are all subject to particular Laws, the least Alteration or Disturbance of which immediately creates a proportionable Disorder and Confusion. They must therefore in the Nature of Things be liable to as many *Diseases*, as there are Means of preventing or disturbing their regular Course. Thus too great a Quantity of Light, shakes the Nerves so much as to hinder all Distinction; and too small a Quantity does not reflect enough, to take Notice of Objects. If any foreign Juices be mixed with the Humours of the Eye, or if their Shape be by any Means altered, so that the *Refraction* be too great or too little; then a Dimness immediately ensues; and if there be a total Obstruction in them or in the Nerves, then follows Blindness. And the same may be applied to all other Parts of the Body, according to whose different *Powers*, or the different Laws of Motion they are subject to; they are incident to various Sorts of Distempers.

Whence
Monsters
and de-
formed
Creatures
proceed.

UNDER this Head may be included Monsters or deformed Creatures. It appears, so far as Observation goes in Things so minute, that in their Origin all Animals are perfect, and the Individuals of every Species *folded up* exactly in the same Manner; so that if in the *Explication* of them, any of the Parts be, by a superior Force, hindered from extending themselves to a due Shape, or if they be any Way blended or confounded with each other; then of Consequence, they must either *want* or *abound* in some Part or other. But this happens as seldom as in the Nature of Things is possible; and there is all the Provision made against it, that the Composition of Animal Bodies would allow. It is therefore no just Objection against them, any more than it is against Trees or Plants; that one Branch of them may by Violence be hindered from growing at all, or very imperfectly; or that by Art, two different Trees may be nourished by the same Stock. Such Things never come to pass, but by some praternatural Impediment or Obstruction.

Whence it
is that they
are liable
to Pains,
&c.

BUT the Aggravation of all these natural Evils, such as the forementioned Diseases, and even Death itself is, that they are for the most part attended with violent Pain and Uneasiness. This, * (the Objector saith) is that which renders *Man*, and, in Proportion, other Animals, *miserable* and *wretched*. What the Cause of this in general is, is very obvious, *viz.* because, as the Scripture says of Man, he was made a *living Soul*, endued with Sensation, or the Power of Feeling. Which were he wholly void of, like all mere material Things; as he would be free from all Possibility of Pain or Misery, so also would he be utterly incapable of any Pleasure or Happiness. That Sort of Life which Man was intended to lead here on Earth, manifestly requires that he should be endued with a Body proper to per-

* Si l'homme est l'ouvrage d'un seul Principe souverainement bon, souverainement saint, souverainement puissant, peut-il être exposé aux Maladies, au Froid, au Chaud, à la Faim, à la Soif, à la Douleur, au Chagrin. *Bayle Dict. under the word Manicheens.*

form the respective Offices of it. Now whatever Materials we suppose this Body *Clarke.* composed of, or whatever the particular Form and Structure of it be; it must be liable to the common Laws which the whole material Part of the Creation is subject to; and consequently will stand in need of continual Repair, in Proportion to the Variety of its different Parts, and to those Decays and Interruptions, both in the Solids and Fluids, which they must perpetually meet with. *These* it is necessary should be signified by some Means or other, in order to a continual Supply for them; and we cannot conceive how this could be better done, than by those different Kinds of Pain or Uneasiness, which are excited by the Disorders that the several Parts of the Body are subject to. *Reason* alone would go but a short Way in this Matter: We have but a very little Knowledge of the Constitution of the various minute Parts of which the Body is composed; so that it would be impossible to find out their Defects and Disorders, and to apply proper Remedies to them; nor would mere abstract Reason afford Men any Inclination after such Enquiries or Observations. Wherefore it is absolutely necessary towards the preserving of the Animal Life, that the Dangers which the several Parts of the Body may be exposed to, should be signified by some immediate Uneasiness, which should excite the *Reason* to endeavour to avoid or provide against them. This is the Foundation of all those Affections and Passions usually ascribed to the Body, which are but so many different Sorts of Pain: Thus Hunger and Weariness put Men upon seeking after Food or Rest, without which they could continue but a very little while; and which they would have no Disposition to, if they were not signified to them in some such Manner as this. And the same holds true of all other bodily Appetites and Desires. And hence I suppose it is, that the external and superficial Parts of the Body are the most sensible, and create the greatest Pain, when they are any Ways affected; because *these* are continually exposed to the various external Objects; and as soon as they are affected by them, give us immediate Notice of it: Whereas the internal Parts, being more remote, cannot be so easily come at, and consequently are not liable to so many Interruptions from the Things without, and therefore need not such quick Sensation. Thus we experience that the Arteries, Bones, and the like, have little or no Sensation at all. This therefore is a very weak Objection against the present State and Condition of Mankind and other Animals, that they are liable to Pains and Uneasiness: By the same Argument there should be nothing in the Universe but Stocks and Stones; for upon the Supposition of any Degree of Sensation, a proportionable Degree of Pain follows upon any Excess or Defect whatsoever. The Fault therefore lyes not in the Nature and Constitution of Animal Bodies; they are in their respective Kinds the most *perfect* that can be; the Degrees of Sensation they are endued with, are exactly proportioned to that Sort of Life which they were intended to lead, and to the Duration of it; and the best Provision that could be under such Circumstances, is made against all Accidents. And we may venture to affirm upon the whole, that a greater or a less Degree would have produced much worse Inconveniences, as sufficiently appears by what the Effect of Art or Abuse is. Neither is it any just Ground of Complaint, that there may be some particular Instances, which, considered by themselves, may seem very extreme and difficult. It is not reasonable to think the established Laws of the Creation should be altered or suspended, for the Sake of such small Irregularities compared with the whole. We ought to form our Judgment not from such single Instances, which are very complex, but from a general View of the whole; and then the Wisdom and Goodness is plain and perspicuous in this and all other Respects.

THUS it appears from a particular Examination of the constituent Parts of Animal Bodies, the Powers or Qualities they are each of them endued with, and the Connexion and Dependence they have upon each other; what the natural and genuine Effects of such Powers and Qualities are, and what Misapplications and Disorders they must in the Course of Things be incident to. With this View it was proper to consider Man only as an inanimated Body, as a Creature endued only with Life and Sensation, which he has in common with all other inferior Creatures; leaving the Consideration of him as an intelligent and voluntary Agent,

as

Clarke. as a Subject afterwards to be treated of. Whence it appears, that as the *Matter* of which humane and all other animated Bodies are composed, is, as the Scripture expresses it, the Dust of the Ground, Part of that common Mass, of which the whole visible World is framed; so it is governed by the common Laws of Gravitation, Cohesion, Fermentation, and the like, which the inanimate Part of the Creation is subject to; and consequently it must be liable to all those Irregularities and Disorders which arise from the different Degrees, and diverse Applications of such Powers or Qualities. But besides *these*, such animated Bodies are also subject to the Laws of Vegetation, which they have in common with all organized Bodies, such as Plants, Herbs, and the like; and hence they are obnoxious to such *Evils* and *Disorders*, as arise from the Motions of Fluids contained in Vessels; the Effects of which are different according to the Degree of Velocity of those Fluids, or the Distractileness in the Vessels, *viz.* by too much Nourishment they produce Excrescencies, or by too little they wither and die. But that which is peculiar to them as animated Bodies, is the Power of Sensation or Feeling, which is superior to that of Vegetation, and was evidently designed to signify the *good* or *evil* State and Disposition of the Body; such Sensations being very agreeable and pleasing when the several Parts of it are in their true and proper Order, and very disagreeable when they are otherwise; and these render the Beings that are subject to them necessarily liable to *Pain*, *Misery* and *Death*. So very compounded a Creature is Man, and also other Animals; and so much depends upon the mutual Influence of the different Parts of which they are composed; the Powers of which, and the Degrees of those Powers, are so various, that the least interfering of them with one another, or Misapplication from any superior external Force, creates a proportionable Disorder and Confusion.

The State of Animal Creatures with Respect to each other; with the Objections against it.

HAVING thus examined the Imperfections and Evils that arise to such Creatures from their own internal Frame and Composition, and the Application of such Means as are necessary for their Preservation and Sustenance; I come now to consider them *relatively*, their Dispositions and Affections towards each other, and what the Result of them are. For against *these* it is objected, that several Species of Creatures live upon each other. That a great Part of the Food even of Man, is the Flesh of Animals; nay, sometimes that Individuals of the same Species devour their own Kind, as we see in Fishes; and this not accidentally upon great Provocation, or in Cases of extreme Hunger, or the like, but that they were ^s originally intended to do so, and therefore are naturally provided with Weapons for that Purpose; or else have a peculiar Disposition and Sagacity, to watch after and ensnare their Prey, as is the Case betwixt Spiders and Flies. I shall endeavour to account for this Difficulty, as far as we have Means of coming to the Knowledge of the particular Circumstances relating to it.

What Right Man has over inferior Creatures.

AND *first* with respect to Man, and the Right he has of killing and eating such Creatures as afford Food and Nourishment to him; for some Creatures, are found by Experience, to be not only nauseous, but unwholesome likewise. That *Man* is superior in Rank and Dignity to all other Creatures of the Earth, is evident from the peculiar Faculties of his Mind, the Degree of Reason, Knowledge and Liberty, which he is eminently capable of above them. This seems to be a Foundation in Nature for some Sort of Authority and Dominion over them, *viz.* to make Use of them to such Purposes, as by their Frames and Make they seem particularly to be calculated for. Thus some are evidently designed for Diversion, others for hard Labour, others for Swiftmess and the like. Thus much the Constitution and Relation they bear to each other, plainly dictates; for Man's bodily Strength is comparatively very small, and the State of Things is such as requires much Labour and Pains to procure the Necessaries and Conveniences of Life, and the Faculties of his Mind were given him on Purpose to seek out for Help and Assistance. And this is confirmed by Scripture, in the Account of the

^f Heu quantum Scelus est, in viscera viscera condi, Congestoque avidum pinguescere corpore corpus; alteriusque animentem animantis vivere leto! Ovid. Metam. Lib. XV. 88.

^g Ἰχθύες καὶ ἄνθρωποι ἐν ὕδασι περὶ τὰ αὐτῶν.

^h Ἐοθεν ἀνθρώπος, ἐπεὶ ὁ δίκην ἔστι μὲν αὐτῷ. Hesiod.

Creation, *And God blessed Them* (that is, the Man and the Woman) *and God said* Clarke. unto them, *Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the Earth, and subdue it, and have Dominion over the Fish of the Sea, and over the Fowls of the Air, and over every living Thing that moveth upon the Earth.* This Grant being in general Terms, it is not absolutely certain how far the Words *Subduing* and *Dominion* are to be extended, Whether to the Life of the Creature or no: Though it is not easy to see how they can otherwise be applied to the Fish of the Sea and the Fowls of the Air, which are of little Use to Men while alive. But the following Words expressly mentioning Food, it seems as if That had been excluded, at least not commanded, in the former; *And God said, Behold I have given you every Herb* ^{29.} *bearing Seed, which is upon the Face of all the Earth; and every Tree, in which is the Fruit of a Tree yielding Seed, to you it shall be for Meat.* All other Uses are manifestly implied; with that Limitation of the wise Man's, *that a righteous, or a merciful Man, regardeth the Life of his Beast;* that is, will not use him with Severity or Cruelty, but with Gentleness and Moderation. But however this was at the Beginning of the Creation, the Circumstances and State of Things is liable to perpetual Change and Alteration; and consequently *That* which was a Duty at one Time may cease to be so at another, and *That* may be allowed in some Cases which was prohibited in others. And so we find it to be here. In the Blessing which God gave to *Noah* after the Flood, the Power of killing and eating living Creatures is given to him much in the same Form, as that of eating Plants and Fruit was granted to our first Parents before: *And God blessed* ^{Gen. ix. 1,} *Noah and his Sons, and said unto them, be fruitful and multiply and replenish* ^{2, 3.} *the Earth; and the Fear of you, and the Dread of you, shall be upon every Beast of the Earth, and upon every Fowl of the Air, upon all that moveth upon the Earth, and upon all the Fishes of the Sea; into your Hand are they delivered; every moving Thing that liveth shall be Meat for You, even as the green Herb have I given you all Things.* This Commission is very full and express; only with the Limitation of the following Words, *but Flesh with the Life thereof, which is the Blood thereof, you shall not eat.* Which Words being often repeated, and great Stress laid upon them, show that they are very material, and, if rightly understood, will help to resolve the forementioned Difficulty.

IN general, that the Flesh of some Animals is proper Food for others, that is, ^{The Flesh of some Animals, is in itself proper Food for others.} agreeable to their Taste, and fit for Nutriment, is evident by continual Experience, and irrational Creatures falling into it by mere natural Instinct; and the universal Practice of Mankind in every Age and Place, even where there are no Footsteps of divine Revelation, recommending it; shows that in the Nature of Things there is no Contrariety in such Application. Whatever Objection therefore lyes against it, must relate to the Manner and Circumstances of doing it. And the principal of these are, the depriving the Creature of Life, and of all that Pleasure it was capable of enjoying, in the right Use of its Faculties and Senses; and also the putting it to all that Pain and Misery, which a violent and unnatural Death is unavoidably attended with. In order to a satisfactory Answer in these Particulars, it will be necessary to consider the following Things.

First, That whatever Right Man is supposed to have over inferiour Creatures, ^{The Right which Man has over inferiour Animals, extends not to any Abuse.} either by the Laws of Nature or Revelation, to apply them to his own Use or Service; it is very certain that He can have no Right at all to misapply or any ways to abuse them. All Kind of Violence or Cruelty therefore, exercised towards brute Animals, is both unnatural and unjust. This concerns only Men; for when such Creatures kill and eat each another, they seem not to do it out of Malice, nor to take any Delight in putting one another to Pain, but only follow their mere natural Appetite in the same manner as they do in Vegetables; they procure them any way wherein they are able to satisfy their Hunger. And this very much abates the Malignity of this Evil; for it is the Notion of Malice or Cruelty going along with killing the Creature, which renders it disagreeable and odious; for mere dying, raises no such terrible Image in our Minds. Irrational Animals there-

^h Ἔστι μὲν γὰρ καὶ φύσιν ἀνθρώπων τὸ σαρκοφαγεῖν· παρὰ φύσιν δὲ τὸ ἀποφάγειν. Porphyrii de Abstinentia, lib. I. § 13.

Clarke. fore are only Instruments of Death to each other; they are void of all evil Design and Intention, and consequently no more culpable than a Stone falling upon them, and by the mere Law of Gravity crushing them to Death. And to prevent any Cruelty in Men, who are allowed to feed upon proper Animals, I take the Caution added in the forecited Words; *but the Flesh with the Life thereof, which is the Blood thereof, shall you not eat*; which is afterwards repeated in regard to the Sacrifices appointed by the Jewish Law, *Only ye shall not eat the Blood; ye shall pour it upon the Earth as Water.* In the former Words the plain Reason is given, why they were not to eat the Flesh with the Blood, *viz. because the Blood is the Life thereof.* In whatever Sense therefore we understand these Words, it is manifest that *Blood* has a strict Relation to *Life*. Whether therefore the Meaning be, that we are not to eat the Flesh of any Creature *raw*, while there is any *Blood*, any natural Warmth, or Possibility of Life in it, as seems to be limited in 1 Sam. xiv. § 32. where it is said that the People of *Israel* when they returned from the Slaughter of the *Philistines*, *being very faint, slew upon the Spoil, and took Sheep and Oxen and Calves, and slew them on the Ground, and the People did eat them with the Blood*; which we find in the following Verse was told to *Saul*, *as a Sin against the Lord, in that they eat with the Blood*: (Whence it seems highly probable, that being in great haste to satisfy their Hunger after so long fasting, the People fell to eating the Creatures while there were some Remains of Life in them, or at least before the Blood was sufficiently drained from them, so as to be assured they were quite dead:) Or whether the Meaning of the Words be, that God had appointed this Token, as a Signal that the Creature was really dead; as seems to follow from the Addition of *Moses*, *Ye shall pour it on the Earth like Water*; that is, when you eat the Flesh of any Animal, after you have killed it, you must be sure to pour the Blood on the Ground, as a Testimony that the Life is entirely spent, and then you may prepare and make it ready: Or whether they might not have some other figurative and typical Meaning to the People of the *Jews*, signifying that the Right of killing such Creatures was not a natural Right, but only by positive Allowance from God; of which their reserving the Blood was to be a Token and Memorial: Or they might have Regard to the Sacrifice of the *Messiah*, whose Blood was to be poured out for the Sins of Men: Whichsoever (I say) of These or any other, be the original Sense of the Words, it is obvious, that they were intended to prevent all Cruelty towards brute Creatures; and that in *This*, as well as all other Uses of them, they should be put to the least Pain that is possible, and *Men* be but mere Instruments of their Death. In this View, Men's killing living Creatures for Food, or such Creatures killing one another for the same Purpose, carries no Malignity or moral Turpitude in it: It is of the same Kind with all other *natural* Evils, the Effect of the present State and Circumstances of Things; and no way to be prevented, but by over-ruling or putting a Stop to the universal Laws of the Creation.

Such Creatures originally made subject to Death.

THUS They were at first made *mortal*: Their Frame and Composition show, that They were intended to continue but for a few Years, and some of them not near so long; the *Materials* also, of which their Bodies are framed, and the *Manner* of their Structure, render them liable to many Diseases from within, and Dangers from without, which may bring them to their End much sooner than the common Period of their Lives. Since therefore they must die, and since this particular Manner of dying is not attended with any greater Evil, nay generally not with so great, as dying by any Distemper or Accident; it may very well be reckoned amongst the common Diseases which they are incident to: And there is no more Reason to complain of the one than of the other; for as to the Effect, which is all that we now consider, there is no Difference to the Creature killed, whether he dies by the Weapons of his Fellow-Creatures, or by the Violence of a Disease. The Conditions of Life, we may observe to be very various; and the Terms on which it depends, are very different to different Sorts of Creatures, according to the Climate or Element which they inhabit, or the Food on which they subsist; so that, compared with each other, the Degrees both of Enjoyment and Duration are also very different. And herein consists the Harmony of the *Animal*, as well as of the *Material* World. If we suppose

suppose the Existence of any one Individual, or any Species of Animals, the same Reason will hold for the Existence of any other Individual or Species. For, abstractly considered, in the Nature of Things, there is no Preference of one above another. This is Matter of mere Choice and Liberty; and *good or evil, perfect or imperfect*, are here only bare relative Terms: In the same Manner as in the planetary System, the different Bodies of it, such as the Sun, Moon or Earth, are arbitrarily formed out of the same common Mass, and are comparatively *better or worse* according to the *Respects* in which they are considered. The original Existence of any Matter at all, the particular Quantity, the Division of it into small Particles, the Powers they are subject to, and the Texture of them, are in themselves all indifferent, and depend upon the Will of an intelligent Agent to determine the Particulars of them, so as will best serve the End proposed. So likewise the Animal Powers and Dispositions, and the Connexion and Dependence which they have upon the Structure of the Body, are infinitely various, both as to their Degree and Duration, and depend in the same Manner upon Intelligence and Will. Wherefore all Objections drawn from what is the natural Result of being finite and limited, if they hold good against any one Particular's existing, they hold as strong against any other Particular that can be supposed to exist. Thus in the Instance before us: That one Animal should be Food for another, is the natural Result of their present Constitution, and of those Affections and Powers they are endued with, and in itself no greater an *Evil* than any other *Imperfection* which they are subject to, or than other Means or Ways of dying. So that either we must say, that it is inconsistent with the Notion we have of *Goodness*, that such Animals should be at all subject to Death or any other natural *Infirmities*; or that, of the many *Ways* by which Death is naturally effected, some ought to be permitted to produce this Effect, and others not; and consequently that there is something particular in *This*, why it should be prevented. Which that there is not, will appear if we consider

Secondly, That it is the Circumstances of dying that aggravate the Evil of it. That 'tis the Circumstances of Death, that aggravate the Evil of it. Abstracted from These, there is no more in it, than in any other natural Imperfection; or than in being deprived of any other natural Benefit, which is not of Right, and which originally depended upon certain Terms and Conditions. That which seems to prejudice us here, is, that we are apt to think such Creatures have the same Notions of Death as we ourselves have, and consequently that it is as terrible to them: Whereas that which St. Paul justly calls the Sting of Death, is peculiar to rational and intelligent Beings, such as Men are; *viz.* Sin. 'Tis the Consciousness of not having acted according to the Laws of Justice and Truth, and the Sense of a superiour Power, who may call them to an Account and punish them for their Neglect or Abuse in a future State; it is This which excites the Fears of Death in Men. But there is no Room for These in inferiour Animals: As they are void of such Kind of Reason and Conscience, so properly speaking, there is no moral Justice or Injustice, Right or Wrong amongst them; neither can they be rewarded or punished for their Actions in these Respects. Wherefore as they seem not to have any Apprehensions but what are raised by present Objects, nor any Consciousness of what is past, or Expectation of what is to come, the Foundation of all the forementioned Aggravations of Death, is hereby taken away, and there remains no more *Evil* in it than the bare Pain, which for the most Part is much less than in any common Distemper.

To this we may add, *Thirdly*, that of those Creatures which are Food for Men, their State upon the whole is much bettered by it. The State of such Animals is upon the whole bettered, by being Food for Men. For not only a greater Number of such Animals are preserved for this Purpose, but also greater Care is taken of them, and more Pains employed about them. Were such Creatures left wholly to themselves, there are innumerable Accidents by which many of them would be destroyed; and those which remained, would go through much Hardship and Difficulty: Whereas in the present Circumstances, all the Art and Industry of Man is made Use of, to improve the Ground for their Sustenance, to give them Meat in due Season, and to secure them against all those Dangers which they would otherwise be exposed to. The Lives therefore of such Creatures

Clarke. tures are hereby rendered the most easy to them that is possible: They enjoy all the Pleasure and Satisfaction of Life which they are capable of; and were they permitted to continue on till the natural Period of their Lives were finished, it would be but a short Addition of Time; and by Experience we find, that their Senses would grow dull, their Appetites fail them, so that they would have but very little Enjoyment left. Wherefore if we put the *Good* they are deprived of, into the Ballance with *That* which is voluntarily conferred upon them, we shall see that this latter very much outweighs it: So that upon the whole there is no Injury done; not to the Species, because that is very much enlarged hereby; nor to the Individuals, because they enjoy more of the Pleasure of Life than they would otherwise do, and they have no Right to the Labour of Men, if they afford them no Advantage by it.

The State of such Animals at the worst, better than that of many other Creatures.

AND if we view the Circumstances of these Creatures in their worst Light, and compare them with other still inferiour Animals; they are in a much better State than many of them. The two chief Properties of Life are the Degree of Enjoyment and the Length of Duration, each of which are very different in the diverse Species of Animals. Some are by their Frame and Constitution made to continue many Years; the utmost Period of the Life of others, is comprehended in a few Days, nay we may say a few Hours. The highest Enjoyment also of some, seems to be but one Degree above Vegetables; whereas in others there are Marks of great Pleasure and Satisfaction. Compared therefore with *These*, the Life of the forementioned Animals is much preferable; and the *Evil* of that particular Manner of dying, is abundantly compensated, by the greater *Good* they are upon the whole possessed of. *Their* Lives might in the natural Course of Things have terminated as soon as the other; they might originally have had fewer Senses, or those which they have, much less acute. There is no prescribing Bounds to the infinite Diversity of Things which are equally the Object of Omnipotence. As they had no Right at all to Existence, so there is no just Foundation of Complaint because *one* possesses more, or in a higher Degree, of *that* which none originally had any Title to. According to this Rule, there could have been no *Diversity* of Animal Creatures, because, when compared together, the State of some must be *better* than that of others: Which Objection overthrows, not only the present Creation, but all Possibility of creating any finite Beings whatsoever; because they will all, in their Proportion, have their Defects and Infirmities, when compared with that which is infinitely perfect. It is therefore much more agreeable to the Notion we have of Wisdom, that as in the *Material*, so in the *Animal* World, there should be all possible Kinds and Degrees, which are superiour to Non-existence. And so Experience and Matter of Fact plainly shows that there are.

By Animals living upon one another, there is the more Good upon the Whole.

IF we consider *Fourthly*, the Effect of Animal Creatures being thus made Food for each other, we shall find that by this Means there is the more Good upon the Whole; for under the present Circumstances of the Creation, Animals living in this Manner one upon another, could not have been prevented, but a much greater *Evil* would have followed. For then there could not have been so great a Number, nor so great a Variety of Animals, as there are at present; some of which are so very minute, and the Quantity of them such, that mixing themselves with Herbs and Plants and Grain on which themselves feed, and with the Water and Liquids which they drink, they must necessarily be devoured by other larger Animals who live upon the same Food, without so much as being seen or any Way perceived by them. It is therefore much better upon the Whole, that They should live upon one another in the Manner they now do, than that they should not live at all. For if such animal Life is to be esteemed superior to not existing at all, or to a vegetable Life; and the more there is of such animal Life, the more of *Good* there is in the World; it is evident, that by this Means there is Room for more whole Species of Creatures, at least for many more Individuals of each Species, than there would otherwise be; and that the Variety of the Creation is hereby much enlarged, and the Goodness of its Author displayed. For the Constitution of animal Bodies is such, as requires that They should be maintained by Food: Now if this Food can be made capable of animal

mal Life also, it is a very great Improvement of it. A certain Quantity of Food *Clarke.* is necessary for the Preservation of a determinate Number of Animals. Which Food, were it mere *vegetable*, would perhaps serve for that Purpose only: But by being so formed as to become *animal*, though it be in a lower Degree, and the Enjoyment of Life in such Creatures less, yet is it more perfect than unformed Clay, or even than the most curious Plant. Thus the animal Part of the Creation has its several Degrees of Life, and as much Variety in it, as is to be found in the inanimate and vegetable Part; so that in this respect, there is so far from being any just Ground of Complaint, that the Wisdom and Contrivance of the animal World is admirable, and plainly shows the Excellency of the Whole, and the Subserviency of all the Particulars in order to obtain the greatest Good that they are capable of.

I SHALL mention but one thing more upon this Head; and that is, to consider what the Consequence would be, of permitting such Creatures to multiply and increase as much as they could, and to die of such Diseases as they are incident to, or even of old Age. This cannot certainly be determined any otherwise than by Experience; but there is just Reason to think that Mankind would be the greatest Sufferers hereby. ^{The permitting such Creatures to increase, would be of very ill Consequence.} We should quickly be over-stocked with them. Those which are now tame, would grow wild, and be very mischievous; and the Plants and Fruits of the Earth would be all destroyed by them: The Air probably ^{would be} infected by them, at least by the Corruption of their dead Carcasses, and perhaps some violent Distempers produced by them. The Plagues brought upon the Land of *Egypt* in this Manner, and the Unwholesomeness of Wildernesses and desert Places, *where, as the Scripture describes them, are fiery Serpents and Scorpions and Drought where there is no Water,* for want of the Arts and Improvements of Men; ^{Deut. viii. 15.} these give sufficient Grounds for the forementioned Conjectures. There are perhaps many other Particulars which escape our Notice for want of knowing all the minute Circumstances of such Creatures; the Relation they stand in to each other, and to the Things about them. Those already mentioned seem to be the principal, and, if not wholly to take off, yet very much to diminish the Weight of the Objection before us.

I HAVE now gone through what I proposed under the first Head of this Discourse, *viz.* to examine into the Nature of those Laws, by which both the *Material* and *Animate* Parts of the World are at present governed; and to compare them with such other Laws, as they were originally equally capable of being governed by: That from hence it might appear, that all those natural *Evils*, which are observed in the Creation, and by many thought to reflect upon, or detract from the Wisdom of its Author; are strictly and properly speaking, no *Evils* at all; but only the genuine Result of that Want or Imperfection, which finite and created Things, endued with various Powers and Qualities, and with different Degrees of them, and regulated by such general Laws as we observe, must unavoidably be liable to.

AND this, I think, does most apparently display the Excellency and Goodness of the Works of the Creation, and as evidently manifest the Wisdom and Power of Him who made Heaven and Earth. For from hence it clearly follows, that no one Part of the Creation being *necessary*, but such as might equally either originally not have existed at all, or have existed in a quite different Manner from what it does now; hence I say it follows, that their *Beings, Powers, Faculties and Perfections*, every Thing which they possess or enjoy, is the free Gift of God, and depends wholly upon his Will for their Continuance or Duration. He is infinitely happy in the Enjoyment of his own Perfections, and the whole Creation can make no Addition to his Happiness. He could therefore propose no other End in the Creation, but to manifest his Power and Wisdom in the *material*

ⁱ Καὶ γὰρ πρὸς αὐτὸν καὶ βῆς καὶ πᾶν τὸ τοιοῦτο μετρίαν μὴ φέρει τινὰς πρὸς τὴν ἀναγκαίαν ἡμῶν ἀγωγὴν ὠφελείας· εἰς πᾶσαν δὲ ἐκπεσὼν δαψίλειαν καὶ μακρὸν ὑπερβολῶς ἔχουσιν τὴν καθεστῶσαν, λυμαίνονται αὐτὸν τὸ βίον ἡμῶν. τὸ μὲν καὶ πρὸς ἀλλήλους τρεπόμενοι, αἵτε φύσεως διαφυγῆς εἰς τὸ τοιοῦτο μελέχον· τὸ δὲ μόνον τὴν ἀνιθεῖσαν ἡμῶν ἐκ γῆς τροφὴν καταναλίσκον. *Porphyr. de Abstinencia, Eccl. Lib. I. § 11.*

^k Ἡ γὰρ τε τὸ πλεονέκτημα οὐκ ὀσφί τὴν ζώον, τὰ τε διήσκοντα, ἐκ τὴν σηπιδόντων φθορὰν ἐμποιήσκει. *Porphyr. ibid. § 16.*

Clarke. World, by the wonderful Order, Harmony and Adjustment of all its Parts so as to be most conducive and subservient to the Beauty and Excellency of the Whole; and to communicate some Share of Happiness to the *animal* World, proportionably to the several Capacities and Degrees of such Creatures: And therefore He appointed all the particular Circumstances and Conditions of them, so as He thought most proper to procure such Happiness. Every Thing whose Existence is possible, is the Object of Creation to infinite Power; and it belongs only to the Wisdom of the same infinite Being, to determine which of them shall actually exist. Thus whether any *material* Things should have existed at all, depended entirely on the Will of the supreme Being. And the same may be affirmed of their Powers and Qualities, and the Laws which they are subject to. Upon Supposition that they do exist, there are in the Nature of Things, some Powers and Qualities they are capable of receiving, and others not; as, in the Instance of *Matter*, there are vast Variety of Laws and Motion which it may be subject to, and which produce very different Effects; but *Understanding*, *Liberty* and the like, it is in its own Nature incapable of: And of those Laws by which it may be governed, there is no other Rule of judging, but from the End to which they are appropriated. The whole Scheme of the material World was at first laid in the divine Mind; in order to effect which, it appears by manifold Experience, that the original Particles of Matter have ¹ certain Forces impressed upon them, which, according to their different Circumstances of acting, either *impel* them towards each other, and cause them to cohere in regular Figures; or else separate them, and cause them to recede from one another, thereby to dissolve such Cohesion; which *Forces* are in themselves purely indifferent, that is, are to be looked upon as mere *Means*, and chosen only because most adapted to obtain the End proposed. Every Revolution and Error therefore is regular and designed, being only the Effect of a Cause acting uniformly and by a stated general Rule; which is much more agreeable to the Notion we have of Wisdom, than to imagine the Course of Things should be perpetually interrupted and confounded. The same is true also of the *animal* Part of the Creation, the several Species of living Creatures which move upon the Earth: They had no Right to exist at all, much less had they any Right to be of any particular Rank or Order, in the infinite Variety that in the Nature of Things were possible to exist. So that their animal Powers, the Faculties and Abilities they have, and the respective Degrees of them, are of mere voluntary Donation; and to have them depend upon certain Terms and Conditions, and in many Cases to be liable wholly to be deprived of them, is no more a real *Evil*, than not to have existed at all: Their Existence being manifestly a free Gift, the Continuance or other Circumstances of which, are entirely in the Power of the Donor. This cannot be better illustrated, than by the Prophet's Similitude as quoted by St. Paul, *Shall the Thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the Potter Power over the Clay, of the same Lump, to make one Vessel unto Honour, and another to Dishonour?* So has the infinitely powerful and allwise Being, an absolute Right to make several Ranks and Degrees of Creatures, which comparatively speaking, are more or less *perfect*, but every one of them in their proper Place most conducive towards attaining the End designed in them all. And it is altogether as unjust and unreasonable to complain of any one of them because it is of an inferior Nature or Degree than another, as it would be to reflect on the Skill of an Artificer, because he fashioneth several Kinds of Vessels for different Uses, some of which are more beautiful and serviceable than others. The Ground of all such Complaints as these, seems to be this; that we are apt to form our Judgment of the Creation, from considering only some of the most inferior Parts of it, independent of the rest: Which is just as if, to use the forementioned Similitude, a Man should pick out of the Potter's Shop the meanest Vessel, or view only the unformed Clay, the Uses of which he was in a great Measure ignorant of, and

Rom. ix.
20.

¹ Nam multa me movent in nonnihil suspicer ea omnia ex viribus quibusdam pendere posse, quibus corporum particulae per Causas nondum cognitae vel in se mutuo impelluntur & secundam figuras regulares coherent, vel ab invicem fugantur et recedunt. *Præf. Newt. ad Princip.*

here-

hereupon immediately condemn both the Materials and the Skill of the Potter. *Clarke.*
The whole Creation is indeed but one *Work*, one *Building*, the several Parts and Inhabitants of which, have a strict Connexion with and Relation to each other. In order therefore to form a true Judgment of it, it would be necessary to comprehend the Whole of it in one View; to have an exact Plan of all that is past, present and to come; and see the mutual Dependence of all the Parts. But this is impossible for our narrow Capacities to do; it is a Defect in the Nature of Things, which is impossible to be remedied. Their Proportions are unalterable; and we might as well expect our Eye should take in the whole Compass of the fixed Stars, and distinctly see every individual Thing contained in them, as that our Understanding should comprehend the Uses and Ends of all the Works of Nature and Providence. All Objections of this Kind therefore are wholly beside the Question. That which truly follows from a just Examination of the present State of Things, even in the worst Light, is no more than this: That as, in the Nature of them, they must be liable to perpetual Mutations and Revolutions; and when they are at the worst, and have ended one Scene, they are yet capable of affording Materials for another; in the same Manner as out of a Chaos the present Earth was formed, and from This again, as *St. Peter* says, will at the Consummation arise a new and different one: So likewise with respect to Animated Creatures, we see the same Individual living under different Forms and in different Elements here. *Life* therefore does not wholly depend upon the Body, but only the *Manner* of living: And what may come hereafter, as we do not particularly know, so we ought not to give our Judgment. That which remains farther to be considered upon this Subject, is the Cause and Origin of *moral Evil*; whence Sin has its Rise and abounds so universally in the World. But This, as it is of great Moment to be known, so it ought to be treated of particularly by itself.

A N
ENQUIRY
INTO THE
CAUSE and ORIGIN
OF
MORAL EVIL.

In which the
Present State and Condition of MANKIND
is Considered and Explained,

Upon the True
PRINCIPLES of MORALITY and REVELATION;

AND THE
OBJECTIONS of the ancient and modern Defenders of the *Manichæan*
Scheme, particularly Mr. BAYLE, fully answered.

BEING
The Substance of Eight SERMONS, preached at the Parish Church
of *St. Mary le Bow*, in the Year 1720.

At the LECTURE founded by
The Honourable *ROBERT BOYLE*, Esq;

B Y
JOHN CLARKE, D.D. Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty.

ISAIAH v. 3, 4. *And now, O Inhabitants of Jerusalem and Men of Judah;
judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my Vineyard.
What could have been done more to my Vineyard, that I have not done in it?
Wherefore when I looked that it should bring forth Grapes, brought it forth
wild Grapes?*

TO
The RIGHT HONOURABLE
RICHARD, *Earl of* BURLINGTON;

The Right Reverend Fathers in GOD
CHARLES, *Lord Bishop of* NORWICH,
EDMUND, *Lord Bishop of* LINCOLN,
SAMUEL, *Lord Bishop of* CARLISLE,
AND
WHITE, *Lord Bishop of* PETERBOROUGH;

T R U S T E E S

Appointed by
The Most Reverend Father in God, **THOMAS**, late
Lord Archbishop of *Canterbury*; the last surviving
TRUSTEE named by

THE HONOURABLE
ROBERT BOYLE, Esq;

THIS
D I S C O U R S E

Is most humbly Dedicated.

T H E

P R E F A C E.

AS the true *Way* to judge of the Beauty and Perfection of the Natural World, is to examine into those Laws by which Material Things are at present governed, and see what the Effects of them are; and not to depend upon the Hypotheses of natural Philosophers: So likewise the true *Way* to judge of the Harmony and Excellency of the Moral World, is to consider the Powers and Faculties of intelligent Agents, and to find out what the proper Application of them to their respective Objects is, and what the Result thereof must be; and not to rely on the Systems of moral Philosophers. Whoever goes upon this Foundation, will quickly be convinced, that the whole Creation was not only made, but is still governed, by an infinitely wise and good Being; who, according to the different Circumstances of Things and Conditions of Persons, regulates them in the best Manner possible for the Benefit of the Whole. This the Founder of these Lectures, the Honourable Robert Boyle Esq; (whose great Skill in natural Philosophy, and thorough Knowledge of the sacred Writings of revealed Religion, rendered him a very proper Judge) was so sensible of, that He instituted these Lectures on purpose to have this Point clearly proved, and the Objections of all Sorts of Persons fully answered. The Prevalency of Moral Evil under the Government of a wise and good Being, has always been esteemed one of the greatest Difficulties: And Men who have been Enemies to all Religion, have taken Advantage of this, to endeavour to persuade Mankind that all Things are under a fatal Necessity, and consequently

The P R E F A C E.

sequently that Virtue and Vice are only mere empty Sounds. I have endeavoured in the following Discourse, to discover the Weakness of these Mens Arguments; and to give such a Representation of the State of Mankind, by examining the natural Principles of which Men are compounded, and comparing them with what is said in Scripture concerning them; as may be sufficient to evince, that Man is the Workmanship of an infinitely perfect Being, who has done and continues to do for him All that is wise and just and fit: Which is enough to satisfy all reasonable and sincere Persons. But the Extravagancies and Demands of unreasonable Men, as there is no End of them, and no Bounds to be set to them; so, in the Nature of Things it is impossible to satisfy them. In this Enquiry, I have kept as close as I could, to the Desire of the Honourable Founder, viz. not to descend to Controversies that are amongst Christians; and therefore I have taken my Account from Experience and Observation, and from what is expressly asserted in Scripture agreeable thereto, without entring into any particular Systems or Deductions. If what I have said, may any way answer the great Design of the worthy Founder, and promote the Interest of true Religion; I have my End.

O F T H E

O R I G I N

O F

M O R A L E V I L.

OF all the Arguments made use of by the Opposers of a Deity and Religion in every Age, there are none which they themselves think more conclusive, or that they have had better Success with, than those drawn from the Consideration of the present State and Circumstances of the World, with relation both to *Things* and *Persons*; the natural *Imperfections* of them, and the *Abuses* they are moreover liable to. The Reason of which is not, that such Arguments are really in themselves more strong and convincing; but 'tis owing to other very different Causes; the chief of which are,

First, The Ignorance of the Generality of Men on this Subject. There are very few, who have any Disposition or Inclination at all towards it; and of them that have, it requires more Time and Pains than they are willing to allow themselves, to acquire such preparatory Knowledge as is necessary to satisfy their Minds in this Particular. Such Persons therefore may very easily be confounded with the Objections raised by those who have greater Knowledge in these Matters than themselves; and if they have not a great Care, may be imposed upon by false though specious Conclusions, which may lead them into Error and perhaps into Vice also. The only Remedy in this Case, is, not to suffer plain Things to be affected by those that are obscure; not to forsake an evident Truth, or depart from a certain Practice, on the account of some distant Consequences which others pretend to draw, but which we ourselves cannot see. The same Prudence is requisite in Matters of Religion and Morality, as in the common and secular Affairs of Life. Every Man's bodily Senses (if the Organs of Sensation are not by Violence abused or destroyed) are sufficient by the common Laws of Nature to distinguish the Objects proper to them, and to see the Relation which they bear to each other. And the same is true of the Faculties of Mens Minds. There are none of so weak and shallow a Capacity (unless by some Distemper or Misfortune, which is out of the Case) but that they can, in the common Instances of Life, distinguish *Truth* from *Falshood*, *Right* from *Wrong*, and the like. The Rule therefore is very plain and obvious, and what every one naturally falls into. If the Eye be not infected with any Disease, if the *Object* be in a due *Position*, and has a sufficient Quantity of *Light*, there is no Danger of being imposed upon with Respect to Colours; and we may venture the most illiterate Person, with the utmost Cunning and Sophistry that Wit and Learning can suggest, to persuade him that there is no Difference between blue and red, green and yellow. But though it be thus under the forementioned Circumstances, yet there are other Circumstances in which the Case is very different; a diseased Eye may represent all Objects of the same Colour, a false Light may confound them

Clarke. with one another; or they may be so mixed and blended together, that it may be very difficult to tell what Species to rank them under. But this does not alter the general Rule, and would be thought a very weak Argument to prove that all Colours are alike, and that, because we may easily mistake in one Case, therefore we may as easily be imposed upon in the other. The Evidence of what we do plainly discern, is not in the least diminished by what we do not so plainly see; the former, Men naturally guide themselves by, and the latter they ought either wholly to neglect, or else to be very careful lest they be imposed upon. And the same Argument holds with respect to moral or religious Truths, and the Practice consequent upon them. Thus there is no Man who takes ever so slight a View of the Heavens and the Earth, but he must say with respect to the former, that the Sun was made to rule the Day, and the Moon and the Stars to govern the Night; and with regard to the latter, according to *St. Paul, That the Rain is sent to do us good, in procuring fruitful Seasons, and to fill our Hearts with Joy and Gladness.* These are Testimonies which no Man in his Senses can deny; the most corrupt and degenerate Ages of the World have been forced to acknowledge such undeniable Evidence: This therefore must not be parted with upon any account. Whatever Difficulties may arise from other Considerations, they cannot shake this Foundation; for it is laid in a Rock, Proof against all Winds and Storms. All such Persons therefore as have either not Abilities or not Opportunities of particularly examining into the Works of Nature, or the present Condition of Mankind, ought to rest satisfied with that Measure of Understanding which God has given them; to apply it sincerely to every Thing that comes within their Sphere of Action; and not to be at all shaken by Difficulties which their Faculties do no more extend to, than their Eyes do to very distant Objects, whose Shape or Figure though they may have a general Notion of, yet they cannot particularly determine.

*Acts xiv.
17.*

The Difficulty of this Subject.

Secondly, Another Reason why Arguments that are drawn from the seeming Imperfections and Defects observed in the natural and moral World, are so plausible, is the real Difficulty in the Subject itself. The Extent of the Creation is such, that the most enlarged humane Understanding cannot possibly comprehend the whole of it. The Parts of it are so numerous and different; the Laws they are subject to, so various, according to their several Positions and Circumstances; in a Word, the Respects and Relations they bear to each other, and the Connexion and Dependance they have upon what is already past and still to come, is such, that all the Assistance and Improvements our Faculties are capable of, is not sufficient fully to explain all the Particulars. But this is a Difficulty common to all Arts and Sciences whatsoever, and lyes in the Nature of the Things themselves, which is no way to be prevented; for finite Knowledge and limited Power cannot come up to infinite Exactness; they can only approach nearer and nearer to the eternal and unerring Rule of Perfection, the gross Lines of which we can but faintly describe. Thus there is room for the wisest Architect to be continually inventing and improving the Art of Building; Study and Experience suggest Variety of new Beauties and Conveniences to him; and the modern Improvements in Mathematicks and Philosophy sufficiently show the fruitful Nature of Things, that they are inexhaustible in their Relations and Consequences. It is not therefore to be wondered at, that weak and finite Understandings should be oftentimes puzzled and perplexed upon such Subjects as these; it is what cannot be supposed to be otherwise, without destroying the necessary and essential Properties of Things, and taking away all Possibility of any finite Beings existing, of how high a Rank or exalted Understanding soever; so that Objections of this Kind do not at all affect either the Things themselves, or the Creator of them. We see it plainly in humane Arts and Sciences; it casts no Reflection on a Master-Builder, in the Judgment of wise and judicious Men, that there are many Parts of his Fabrick, which to them who are not skilled in Architecture, seem inconvenient, useless and perhaps irregular. And in the Science of Mathematicks, a Man may see the Demonstrations of many Propositions; and yet there may be many more so obtruse, that he cannot comprehend them. Neither of these

these Difficulties are thought really to affect the Art or Science themselves, nor *Clarke.* the Persons concerned in them. The Rules and Propositions are nevertheless true, though they be not understood by every one; and that Wisdom and Skill which is built upon them, is nevertheless certain, though not comprehended by the Vulgar. The same may be affirmed of the Works of the Creation, and the Wisdom of Providence. The Rules by which the *material* and *intellectual* Beings are governed, are regular and uniform, such as are fit to be prescribed to such Subjects; and the Difficulties which arise in any complex Case, all the Particulars of which we have not Means of knowing, do not affect the Rules in general, nor those other Particulars that are plain and demonstrable. Thus for Instance, all the Motions of the primary Planets are exactly accounted for by the Law of Gravitation; but it is very difficult to explain the Motion of the secondary ones, especially where there are a Number of them, by the same Law, because their Motion is so much compounded: Yet no Astronomer doubts but the same Law obtains amongst Them, and that every Irregularity is the genuine Effect of this Law. And if any Person had Sagacity enough to explain all these, there might be still more complicated Instances, which would exceed his Understanding, in the same manner as if a Man should complain that his Eyes would only take in Objects at a Mile's Distance, and not at the Distance of the Moon: If this latter had been granted him, the Foundation of complaining had been still the same, because his Eyes would not extend to the fixed Stars. There is no End of such Kind of arguing as this; it is wholly beside the Question. That which ought to satisfy every serious Person is, that there are Marks of Wisdom and Goodness evident in numberless Particulars to the meanest Capacity, upon the least Attention, of which they are as sure as that they have any Faculties of Discernment, or that there is any real Difference in the Nature of Things. And the further such Enquiry is made, and the more nicely the Creation is examined into, the more does the Evidence increase; so that the real Difficulty lyes only in the Disproportion of our intellectual Faculties, which are limited to the Relations of Things, which are boundless. All therefore that is our Duty or that we can do in this Case, is to make the best Use of that Measure of Knowledge and Understanding which God has given us, to apply the respective Powers and Abilities of our Minds to their proper Objects, and to be continually improving and enlarging them. If we be sincere and industrious herein, we shall quickly be convinced, that the Frame and Constitution of the Universe was originally made, and is still governed, by the nicest Rules of Wisdom and Goodness; and we shall not be at all surpris'd or confounded at the Objections rais'd by irreligious or profane Men, on the Account of the Irregularities and Disorders observed in it. It is not sufficient to weaken the whole, that they can produced some very complicated Instances, which we cannot perfectly account for. Nothing less can make good their Argument, than showing the absolute Inconsistency and Contradiction of some Things to the clear Ideas we have of Order and Wisdom. But the Method of such Persons is, for the most part, just the contrary. They single out the most perplexed Case: And because the Boundary betwixt *Good* and *Evil*, *Right* and *Wrong*, is very narrow and hard to be distinguished, they therefore endeavour to render it invisible, and then argue from that which is obscure to that which is plain: Just as if a Man should affirm, that there is no Difference betwixt *Sweet* and *Bitter*, because they may be so mixed together that the nicest Taste cannot tell which prevails. The direct contrary to this, is the true Method not to be deceived, *viz.* to begin with what we are sure cannot possibly impose upon us; and to examine whatever appears difficult, by those Rules which are plain and certain. And though perhaps we shall not be able to comprehend the Whole, yet we shall see enough to satisfy us, that it is the same Wisdom that governs the Whole, and that *that* Part which we do not understand is not defective, but that it is wholly owing to our own Weakness and Shortightedness that we can see no further. St. Paul's Comparison is very just here, *We know only in part,* 1 Cor. xiii. *we speak and understand and think as Children; but when we become Men, we shall put away childish Things.* All our Knowledge is but comparative; the Reason

Clarke. son of Things will unfold itself proportionably to the Enlargement of our Faculties; and we may go on to Eternity without exhausting the Subject. With this View it is, that I have undertaken to examine the Subject of *Natural* and *Moral Evil*, and to enquire into the Cause and Origin of each of them, so far as we have sufficient *Data* from Experience and observable *Phænomena*. The Method I at first proposed was, to consider,

First, The Nature of those *Laws*, by which the material World is at present governed, compared with other *Laws*, which it was originally equally capable of; whence the *Weakness* or *Perfection* of them might plainly appear; and from which arise all the *Wants* and *Imperfections* in *ourselves* and the *Things* about us; such as the not having at all, or the not having to that Degree which other Beings have, certain Powers, Faculties and Excellencies.

Secondly, As a Consequence of *These*, I proposed to consider the Foundation of all *natural Evils*, such as *Diseases*, *Pain* and *Death*, &c. which *Men* and all other *Creatures* are subject to: And all kind of *Disorders* and *Irregularities* in the Things without us, as *Storms*, *Tempests*, *Earthquakes*, and the like.

Thirdly, I proposed also to examine into the Cause of *Moral Evil*; and to see from whence spring all those *Sins* and *Vices*, which we find committed by *Men* every Day, and which render them so corrupt and miserable. All which was undertaken, in order to make appear the Wisdom and Goodness of God in the Works of the Creation; that the *whole System* is as perfect and compleat as it was intended to be; the several *Parts* of it endued with such *Powers* as they were best capable of; and subject to such *Laws*, and placed in such *Order*, as is most conducive to obtain the respective Ends proposed by them: And that *all*, that in the Nature of Things was possible, is done, to *prevent* or *provide* against every *Evil* or *Inconvenience* that under such Circumstances might happen: And consequently all the *Errors* that are, being regular, and the genuine Effects of Things being governed by general *Laws*, cast no Reflection on the Excellency of the Workmanship, nor the Wisdom of the Author. So far as relates to the Origin of *Natural Evil* I have taken a brief Survey of the Material World, and considered distinctly the principal Parts of it, what the proper *Ends* and *Uses* of them are, and what *Misapplications* and *Abuses* they are consequently capable of. From which Comparison it is very evident, that *every Thing* that can be supposed to exist from the highest to the lowest, is equally the Object of Creation or Production, to infinite Power: that it belongs to *Wisdom* and *Goodness* to determine *which* and *how many* of all the possible Variety shall actually exist, and also to determine every particular *Circumstance* and *Manner* of their Existence. And as there is a real and essential Difference in the Nature of such Things, some being capable of Powers and Properties which are inconsistent with others; all that we can conceive infinite Wisdom and Goodness and Power in Conjunction, to do in regard hereto, is, to propose particular *Ends*, and to subordinate every Part with such Properties and Powers, as may in the most effectual manner produce those *Ends* to a general and universal *Good*. Thus *Matter* is the Object of Creative Power, as are also the Degrees of those *Powers* which it is capable of: But the particular *Quantity* of Matter, with the particular *Form* and *Manner* it now subsists in, and the *Laws* of Motion to which it is subject, *These* all are the Effect of Choice, and can be determined only by the *End* they serve. It is impossible for our narrow Capacities in this *Synthetic* way, to say *which* is best upon the Whole, unless we could in one View compare all the Variety which is in the infinite and eternal Possibility of Things; *We* must begin at the other End, *viz.* in the *Analytic* Method, with those Things which are plain and obvious, and by degrees advance to others more complicated; and so, as *St. Paul* in another Case expresses it, *reach forth unto those Things which are before, and press towards the Mark*, which is infinitely perfect and compleat. But though we cannot thus form a Judgment of the *Whole*, we can yet observe the Difference of the Parts, and have hereby sufficient Ground to pronounce of *those* which we have not Means of knowing, that they are of a Piece with what we do know, and belong to the same universal Rule. All that Matter is capable of in its own Nature, is
Extension,

Extension, Solidity, Divisibility and the like, which make it the Subject of all imaginable Variety of Figure, Motion, and Order or Texture. Whence in order to the Composition of the present material System, nothing more seems necessary, to account for all the *Phænomena*, but that the constituent Particles of it should be indued with particular *impulsive* or *recessive* Forces, which acting according to the Rules of Mechanicks, produce regular Figures and other proper Effects; and consequently that every *natural Evil* or *Disorder*, is such, as flows from the comparatively imperfect Nature of the Subjects, or from their being governed by certain and stated Laws: So that such Evils could no otherwise have been prevented, but by supposing that it is inconsistent with an infinitely Wise and Powerful Being, to create any such Thing as *Matter* at all; or that it is possible for such a Being to give to Matter such Powers as are contradictory to, and inconsistent with the Nature of it; or else that it is suitable to such a Being, perpetually to interpose and in a miraculous Manner interrupt that Course of Things which himself has prescribed, rather than permit them uniformly to proceed to their respective Ends. Every one of which Assertions is very absurd, and contrary to the Ideas we have of infinite Power and Wisdom. And the same may be affirmed of those Powers and Principles, which are not *Mechanical*; such as are the Causes of *Vegetation* and *Animal Life*. They are capable but of certain Degrees of Perfection, beyond which nothing can in Reason be expected, as I have shewn in the particular Instances.

I SHALL pursue the same Method in the present Inquiry into the Cause and Origin of *Moral Evil*; by considering distinctly,

First, THE Powers, Faculties or Perfections, which belong peculiarly to Man; and the Degree and Extent of them.

Secondly, WHAT are the proper Objects of such Powers and Faculties; and wherein consists the Nature of *Virtue* and *Vice*, moral Good and Evil. And

Thirdly, WHAT are the proper Motives and Inducements, and how to be applied, so as in the most effectual Manner possible, to procure and promote the Practice of *Moral Good* or *Virtue*, and to hinder or prevent the Practice of *Moral Evil* or *Vice*. From which Considerations it will appear, how it is possible for such Creatures to commit Sin, and what is the Cause of the actual Commission of it; notwithstanding the Creator is infinitely Good. And from hence we shall be enabled to answer such Objections as are usually made against the present Constitution and Government of the *moral World*.

THE Sum of these Objections is expressed by the Platonick Philosophers in this plain and short Query, ^a *Whence is Evils, when every Thing that God does is Good.* But the *Epicureans* were more large and particular, whose Sense is given by ^b *La-stantius* in the following Words: God, says *Epicurus*, is willing to abolish all Evils, but not able; or, He is able, but not willing; or, thirdly, He is neither willing nor able; or else, lastly, He is both able and willing. If He is willing and not able, He is a weak Being; which is not agreeable to the Notion of God. If He is able and not willing, He is an envious Being; which is no less disagreeable to the Notion of Him. If He is neither willing nor able, He is both a weak and an envious Being, and therefore not God. If He is both willing and able, which is the only thing that is agreeable to his Nature, then whence come Evils? Or why does He not abolish them? The same Objection is urged by the Academick in *Tully*, in a somewhat different Manner, thus. The Person who represents the *Stoick*, having produced a large Catalogue of the most flagrant Crimes, committed by Persons ^c of each Sex, of every Age, in all Places and of all Professions, and with the highest Aggravations, ascribes the Cause of them to Mens abusing that Faculty of Reason, which is the Gift of God, and bestowed on Man, as a spiritual Patrimony,

^a See Maximus Tyrius Dissert. 25.

^b De Ira Dei, cap. 13.

^c Sentit domus uniuscujusque, sentit forum, sentit curia, campus, focii, provinciae, ut, quemadmodum ratione recte fiat, sic ratione peccetur. De nat. Deor. lib. III. § 27.

Clarke. for the improving and advancing his intellectual Nature. To which the *Academick* replies; that, granting it to be so, it appears in Fact, that there are so few who make a right use of their Reason, compared with those who abuse it; ^d that God had done better by Mankind, never to have given them any Reason at all, than to give them it attended with such pernicious Consequences: In the same manner, as it is better in a Physician not to give his Patient Wine, which is sometimes, but very seldom, good for them; than to run the Hazard of almost certain Death, for the very uncertain Hope of Recovery. And because He foresaw what Reply would be made to this, viz. Does not God do well by us, because we abuse the Benefits He confers on us? Are Fathers unkind to their Children in leaving them their Estates, because many of them squander them away? Therefore he goes on to obviate this by saying, ^e That such Comparisons will not hold; that if God had intended the greatest Mischief to Man, he could not more effectually have done it; wherefore had he consulted their Good, He should have prevented this Abuse, and given them only such good Reason as should have driven away all Evil. For as He has all Knowledge, so He could not but foresee every thing that would come to pass. And as He has ^f all Power, so as to be able to effect any Thing, without any Labour or Pains, by his mere Will; He could have hindered it. And the Conclusion this Man draws, is this, ^g That either the Supreme Being does not know the Extent of his own Power, or He has no Regard to the Affairs of Mankind; or else He cannot judge what is best for them. Thus the Philosophers of old, vainly reasoned concerning the Administration and Government of the moral World. The general Fallacy of whose Arguing, appears from hence.

The Weakness of the Epicurean Arguments

First, IN the *Epicureans*, their Arguments, if they prove any thing, prove too much, viz. That there ought to have been no finite or created Beings at all. For if the true Notion of God be, that He is to exercise his Power and other Attributes, in only the highest Instance that is possible, it is manifest that those Perfections being infinite in every respect, the Object of them must be so too, which destroys the Foundation of different Orders or Degrees of Beings, and takes away his Liberty of communicating Instances of Goodness to them, proportionably to their several Capacities, and as He sees fit. Whereas the true Notion of God, from the Observation of his Works, and from the Variety of those Beings which we see do actually exist, is, that there should be different Species of Beings; the Faculties, Abilities and Circumstances of which, should also be very different; and consequently the Exercise of his Power and other Attributes towards them, be proportioned to their respective Capacities, and in such a manner as He himself thinks most conducive to attain the End proposed.

The Weakness of the Arguments of the Academicks.

THE latter Arguments, of the *Academicks*, are rather oratorical and poetical Descriptions, than Arguments; and are calculated more to excite the Passions and captivate the Imaginations of the Vulgar, than to convince the Reason and satisfy the Judgment; and consist chiefly in representing Things in the worst Light with the most affecting Expressions. The same Genius could have taken the other side of the Question, and rendered it altogether as plausible. So that in this respect they may be set, the one against the other.

BUT, to allow them their utmost Force; they are, at best, either 1st, Arguments *ad ignorantiam*, and prove only that human Capacity is very shallow, and not that the Reason of Things itself is absurd. For as, in the *natural World*, some of the ancient Astronomers invented very absurd Hypotheses, to solve the *Phænomena* of Nature, and then complained of the Author of it; whereas the

^d Ut satius fuerit nullam omnino nobis a Diis immortalibus datam esse Rationem, quam tanta cum pernicie datam. *De nat. Deor. lib. III. § 27.*

^e Non enim ut patrimonium relinquitur, sic Ratio homini est Beneficio Deorum data. Quid enim potius hominibus dedissent, si iis nocere voluissent? injustitiæ autem, Intemperantiæ, Timiditatis quæ semina essent, si his vitiis Ratio non subesset? *Ibid.*

^f Nihil est quod Deus efficere non potest & quidem sine labore ullo: ut enim hominum membra, nulla contentione, mente ipsa, ac voluntate moveantur; sic numine Deorum, omnia fingi, moveri, mutarique posse. *Ibid. § 39.*

^g Itaque aut nescit quid possit, aut negligit res humanas, aut quid sit optimum non potest judicare. *Ibid.*

true Fault was their Ignorance of the real Laws by which it was governed: So *Clarke.* upon due Consideration it will appear in the *moral World*, that the proper Objects are no less duly proportioned to the *intellectual* and *rational* Faculties; and that there are *Laws* as agreeable to *them*, and *Motives* as much suited to *incline* them, as the Proportions and Relations of Things, are fitly suited in the material System. And consequently *Here* also every thing is according to just Weight and Measure.

OR else 2dly, These Objections are Arguments drawn from the natural *Imperfections* of finite intellectual Powers and Capacities: And like the foregoing Arguments of the *Stoicks*, if they prove any thing, they prove too much, *viz.* that it were better to be without such Faculties, than to have them so capable of being abused. Which is a Contradiction to the very Supposition of them; for they cannot be in any Degree, but they must in the Nature of the Thing be liable to proportionable *Abuses*, as shall be more fully made appear afterwards.

And that we may not omit any thing that is thought material, we will state the Case in the Words of a *Modern* Advancer of the *Manichæan* Scheme, who pretends to have represented it in such a manner as to render it unanswerable. The Arguments made use of by *Him* are of two Sorts; *First*, such as are drawn from the *natural* Notions we have of God, according to the Principles of Reason and Philosophy; and *Secondly*, such as are drawn from the Representation made of the divine Attributes and Perfections, in the *Scriptures* of the Old and New Testament. The Sum of the former is comprehended in these Words: ^h *According to the Rules of Philosophy it may be maintained, that if it be repugnant to the Nature of God to produce Sin, it is repugnant to the same Nature to produce Creatures who will infallibly produce Sin, under those Circumstances in which He chose to place them: For according to our most distinct Ideas, it is altogether the same thing to commit Murder one's self, as to put a Man into such Circumstances in which we certainly know He will be killed.* And again in another ⁱ Place to the same Purpose; *If we depend only upon one Cause, Almighty, infinitely good and infinitely free, and which disposes universally of all Beings according to the Pleasure of his own Will, we ought not to feel any Evil, all our Good ought to be pure, and we ought never to have any thing to distaste us. The Author of our Being, if He is infinitely beneficent, ought to take a continual Pleasure in making us happy, and preventing every Thing that may disturb or diminish our Joy; for this is a Character essentially contained in the Idea of Supreme Goodness.* The other Arguments taken from the Scripture Representations of the present Circumstances of Mankind, and the Method of God's dealing with them are such as these. ^k *According to the Scripture (says he) there is but one good Principle, and yet moral and natural Evil have been introduced among Mankind: It is not therefore contrary to the Nature of a good Principle, to permit the Introduction of moral Evil, and to punish Crimes.—I will answer, yes: The manner of introducing Evil, under the Empire of a Sovereign Being infinitely good, infinitely holy, and infinitely powerful, is not only inexplicable, but incomprehensible. And what has been objected against the Reasons why this Being has permitted Evil, is more a-*

Objections of the Moderns against the System of the Moral World.

^h *Entretiens de Maxime & de Themiste p. 142.* Pendant qu'il voudra philosopher on lui soutiendra que s'il repugne à la nature de Dieu de produire le péché, il repugne à la même nature de produire des creatures qui produiront le péché infalliblement, dans les circonstances qu'il leur choisira. Car selon nos idées les plus distinctes, c'est toute la même chose, commettre un meurtre soimême, ou faire trouver un homme dans les circonstances où l'un fait certainement qu'il sera tué.

ⁱ *Bayle's Dictionary, under the Word Pauliciens, Remark E.* Car si nous ne dependons diront ils (les Pauliciens) que d'une Cause toute puissante, infiniment bonne, infiniment libre, & qui dispose universellement de tous les êtres selon le bon plaisir de sa volonté, nous ne devons sentir aucun mal; tous nos biens doivent être purs, nous n'y devons jamais trouver le moindre degout, &c.

^k *Ibid. Remark E.* Il n'y a, selon l'Ecriture, qu'un bon Principe; & cependant, le mal moral & le mal physique se sont introduits dans le genre humain: il n'est donc pas contre la nature du bon principe qu'il permette l'introduction du mal moral, & qu'il punisse le crime, &c.—Mais le peuvent-elles être? (viz. les Raisons *a priori* refutées?) Oûi, repondrai-je: la maniere dont le mal s'est introduit sous l'empire d'un souverain Etre infiniment bon, infiniment saint, infiniment puissant, est non seulement inexplicable, mais même incomprehensible; & tout ce que l'on oppose aux raisons pourquoi cet Etre a permis le mal, est plus conforme aux lumieres naturelles, et aux idées de l'ordre, que ne le sont pas ces raisons.

Clarke. *greeable to natural Light, and to the Ideas we have of Order, than these Reasons are.* And ¹ a little after, He says with respect to our first Parents; *That it cannot be conceived that the first Man could receive from a good Principle, the Faculty of doing ill. This Faculty is vicious; and every Thing that can produce Evil, is bad; since Evil cannot proceed but from a bad Cause.*—And 'tis impossible to comprehend; that God did only permit Sin; for a bare Permission of Sin, added nothing to Freewill; nor was it a Means to foresee whether Adam would persevere in his Innocence, or fall from it. And in another ^m Place, speaking of the Disputes amongst Christians upon this Head, and their several Hypotheses and Explications of it, He has the following Words: *The only Principle which you admit, willed from all Eternity, according to you, that Man should sin; that this Sin should be infectious; that it should produce, without End and without Intermission, all imaginable Crimes over the Face of the whole Earth, In consequence whereof, he prepared for Mankind in this Life, all the Miseries that can be conceived; such as Pestilence, War, Famine, Pain, Vexation; and after this Life, a Hell, wherein all Men almost shall be eternally tormented, after such a manner, as makes one's Hair stand on end, when one reads the Description of it. If such a Principle is otherwise perfectly good, and loves Holiness infinitely; must we not acknowledge, that the same God is, at one and the same time, perfectly good and perfectly bad, and that He loves Vice no less than He does Virtue?* These are the chief Arguments made use of by this eminent Defender of the Manichæan Scheme: which that I might not misrepresent, I have given you in his own Words. Now though these Arguments are pretended to be drawn from the Consideration of the present State and Practice of Mankind, with regard to moral Evil, as an unanswerable Objection against the World's being governed by one Principle, infinitely powerful, wise and good; yet notwithstanding all their boasted Strength, they will appear, upon strict Examination, to be built upon no better Foundation than those of the ancient *Epicureans* and *Academicks*.

Defects
and Irregularities
in the Moral
World,
not inconsistent
with
the natural
Notions we
have of
God.

FOR *first*; As to those Arguments drawn from the *natural* Notions we have of God, according the Principles of Reason and Philosophy; *these*, far from teaching us, that it is inconsistent with the Notions we have of an infinitely powerful, wise, and good Being, that there should be any Defects or Irregularities in the *moral World*; show us evidently on the contrary, that in the Nature of Things such Defects *will* be; they are the unavoidable Result of Things being finite and limited: Else there must have been no such Creatures at all, endued with those Faculties and Powers which we observe in them; or no general and regular Laws prescribed for their Direction; for every one of these, in any Degree whatsoever, supposes a Possibility of Deviation; and consequently that *Sin* may be introduced into the World; and infinite Power, Knowledge and Goodness, can do no more than is compatible with the State and Capacity of the Subject. Philosophically speaking therefore, there can be no such thing as *Impeccability* in any created Being, of how exalted a Station soever; for it will always be *possible*, that limited Understandings may be deceived, and the Actions consequent thereupon, not according to the exact Rules of Truth and Right. This is well expressed in the Book of *Job*, (Ch. xv. 15.) *Behold, He putteth no trust in his Saints, yea, the Heavens are not clean in his Sight; how much more abominable and filthy is Man, which drinketh Iniquity like Water?* Since therefore finite intelligent Beings, necessarily suppose *Peccability*; the different Degrees and Kinds of which, are, according to their diverse States and Conditions, more or less perfect, when compared

¹ *Ibid.* Remark F. On ne conçoit pas que le premier homme ait pu recevoir d'un bon principe la faculté de faire le mal. Cette faculté est un vice: tout ce qui peut produire le mal est mauvais, puisque le mal ne peut naître que d'une cause mauvais &c.—Et il est impossible de comprendre que Dieu n'ait fait que permettre le péché; car une simple permission de pecher, n'ajoutoit rien au franc arbitre, & ne faisoit pas que l'on peut prévoir si Adam persévérerait dans son innocence, ou s'il en decheroit, &c.

^m *Ibid.* Le principe unique que vous admettez, a voulu de toute éternité, selon vous, que l'homme pechât, & que le premier péché fût une chose contagieuse; qu'elle produisit sans fin & sans cesse, tous les crimes imaginables sur toute la face de la terre; en suite dequoi il a prepare au genre humain dans cette vie tous les malheurs qui se peuvent concevoir, le peste, la guerre, la famine, la douleur, le chagrin, & après cette vie un enfer où presque tous les hommes seront éternellement tourmentez, d'une maniere qui fait dresser les cheveux quand on en lit les descriptions, &c.

together; but bear no Proportion to Infinity: Either we must say, that it is inconsistent with the Idea we have of the Supreme Being, to create any Thing superior to Stocks and Stones, or indeed any thing at all; or else that He is at perfect Liberty, to create what Sort of Intelligent Beings He pleases, to place them in such Circumstances as He thinks most proper and suitable for them, and to regulate them by those Laws which He sees best upon the Whole. There is no Medium betwixt these two. This our ⁿ Author himself seems to have been aware of, and to acknowledge the Consequence of it, *viz.* that the Universe is but one Being, and every thing contained in it, Part of that Being; and all the Motions and Actions belonging to any of them, the necessary Effects of That Being. For thus He says in the forecited Place: *According to the Idea we have of a created Being, we cannot comprehend that it can be a Principle of Action, that it can move itself; and that, receiving in every Moment of its Duration, its Existence, and the Existence of its Faculties wholly from another Cause, it should create in itself any Modalities by a Power inherent in itself.— Seeing therefore a Creature cannot be moved by a mere Permission of acting, and has not in itself a Principle of Motion, it is absolutely necessary that God should move it. He must therefore do something else than barely permit Man to sin.* What is all this, but openly confessing that it is a Contradiction in the Nature of Things, to suppose God can make any Creatures at all, endued with Liberty or a Power of moving themselves; and that what we call *Action* is merely *Passiveness*, being acted upon; and that God is directly the *immediate* Cause of every Thing that is done. The unavoidable Consequence of which is, that *Men* and all other superiour, as well as inferiour *Creatures*, are not real Beings or distinct Substances, have properly no Existence at all, but are only Modes of the Deity; or at least, that they are without any *Understanding* or *Liberty* of their own; and therefore, being only mere *Machines*, they are absolutely incapable of *Good* or *Evil*, *Virtue* or *Vice*, and can neither be rewarded nor punished for what does not belong to them; but every Thing is to be ascribed to the one Principle, who is the sole Author of all Actions, and in whose Hands all Things are mere Instruments. This is just such a Way of arguing, as it would be in regard to the *material* World, because some of the *Phænomena* are difficult to be accounted for, therefore to assert that there is no such Thing as *Matter* or *Motion* existing at all; but that they are only mere Ideas or Imaginary Representations in our Minds, without any Thing external to answer them. I don't see how it is possible to argue about such Hypotheses; it can only be referred to the Experience and common Reason of Mankind to determine in such Cases. For even in Mathematical Demonstrations, which are the most strong and conclusive, there must be some Postulata, some simple Truths known by *Intuition*; which whoever pretends not to allow, is incapable of seeing any Deductions from them. And so it is in the Case of *Morality*; there must be some first Principles, some *immediate* Objects of the Understanding, as easy to be taken notice of, and distinguished by it, as natural Objects are by the bodily Senses. And it is altogether as vain to attempt to argue with any Person who sees not the Difference of such intellectual Objects, *viz.* moral Good and Evil; as it would be to dispute with a blind or a deaf Man about Colours and Sounds. Unless therefore it could be shown, that it implied a plain Contradiction to suppose any such Thing as finite created Beings, endued with Understanding, Liberty or a Power of acting, and such like Faculties of the Mind; it must be granted *possible* that such Beings may exist; that is, that they are the Objects of Power, and depend upon the Will of the Supreme Being. But as to their *actual* Existence, together with all the Circumstances of them, this cannot be determined otherwise than by *Experience*; and to *that* we must appeal. And so plain and evident it is in these Particulars, that we may venture

ⁿ *Pauliciens*, Remark F. Outreque par les Idées que nous avons d'un être créé, nous ne pouvons point comprendre qu'il soit un principe d'action, qu'il se puisse mouvoir lui même; & que recevant dans tous les momens de sa durée son existence, & celle de ces facultez; que la recevant, dis-je, toute entiere d'une autre cause, il crée en lui même des modalitez par une vertu qui lui soit propre. — La creature ne pouvant donc pas être mué par une simple permission d'agir, & n'ayant pas elle-même le principe du mouvement, il faut de toute necessité que Dieu la meuve; il fait donc quelque autre chose que de lui permettre de pecher.

Clarke. to ask any one who pretends to be diffident herein, what greater Evidence he could desire upon Supposition the Thing were true, than we now have, that Man is an *intelligent* and *voluntary Agent*. Upon which Foundation alone the Whole of Morality is built; for this is the Corner Stone, which if once removed, the whole Fabrick immediately falls to the Ground. Wherefore, as in the *natural* World, it must be taken for granted, or left to the Criterion of every one's Senses, whether there be any such Thing as *Matter*, and what particular Laws of Motion it is subject to, before we can pretend to make appear the Excellency and Goodness of the Creation; so likewise in the *moral* World must it be taken for granted, that by what every Man feels within himself, and observes in others, Mankind are *intelligent* and *voluntary Agents*. And upon this Supposition, the true Method of Enquiry, in order to judge of the Goodness and Wisdom of the Creator, and the Excellency and Perfection of the Creature; must be to examine the particular State and Condition of such Beings, what Laws they are subject to, and under what Obligation to observe them. Had our Author pursued this Method, he would have seen, that beside the *Absurdity* of introducing two Principles, in order to account for the Phænomena of *moral Evil*, there is no *occasion* for them; but that Things may be better solved without them; and that his own Method leads directly to an absolute Fatality, which is the same as Atheism.

The Weakness of those Arguments pretended to be drawn from Scripture.

Secondly, As to the other Arguments taken from the *Scripture* Representations of the present Circumstances of Mankind, and the Method of God's dealing with them; it may be observed, that they are founded either upon some Rhetorical or Allegorical Expressions; or that they relate to some Custom or generally received Opinion, which prevailed and was well understood, at that Time and in those Places, but perhaps is very difficult to understand perfectly now; or else they are built only upon mere Hypotheses, and are nothing but humane Fictions, as are many of the Doctrines of the modern Schoolmen; which are so far from being clear Deductions from Scripture, that they are utterly inconsistent with it, and no less repugnant also to common Sense and Reason. All Arguments of this Kind, are only mere Abuse of the Scripture, and return upon the Heads of those who make Use of them. For these Books of Scripture, have at least the common Right of all other Books, and ought to be read impartially, and with the same View of Understanding, and applying what is contained in them; which is no way really effected by the Abuse of weak or prophane Men. Thus those Words of King David, *The Wicked are estranged from the Womb, they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking Lies*, have been applied to all Mankind, representing them as born with a natural and universal Corruption and Depravation of the very *Faculties* and *Dispositions* of their Minds, which yet are so manifestly a Rhetorical Description of the Practice of very wicked Men only, that we may venture to say, they would never have been misunderstood in any other Book. So likewise because the *Devil* is said to be the *Prince* and *God* of this World, and represented as having great Influence, Power, and Interest amongst Mankind; such kind of Expressions have been aggravated so as to make him a very potent Being, and, as the forecited Author says, abating that he is not eternal and uncreated, very near equal to the evil Principle of the *Manichæans*; For, ° says he, *it has been a constant Opinion amongst Christians from the Beginning, that the Devil is the Author of all false Religions; that he moves the Hereticks to dogmatize, and inspires Men with Errors, Superstitions, Schisms, Lewdness, Avarice, Intemperance; in a Word, with all the Crimes that are committed amongst Men; that he deprived Adam and Eve of their Innocency; from whence it follows, that he is the Cause of Moral Evil, and of all the Miseries of Man*. Yet comparing these Texts with others which are not figurative, nothing can be more clear than that the Devil is a Being very little superior to Man; that it is from the Similitude which wicked Men bear to him, that they are said to stand

° *Pauliciens*, Remark H. C'est une opinion repandue de tout tems dans le Christianisme, que le Diable est l'auteur de toutes les fausses religions; que c'est lui qui pousse les heretiques à dogmatiser, que c'est lui qui inspire les erreurs, les superstitions, les schismes l'impudice, l'avarice, l'intemperance, en un mot tous les crimes qui se commettent parmi les hommes: que c'est lui qui fit perdre à Eve & à son mari l'état d'innocence: d'où s'ensuit qu'il est la source du mal moral, & la cause de tous les malheurs de l'homme.

in several Relations to him; that his Temptations are generally no other than what the common Infirmities and Passions of Men, and the natural Objects which the World affords, expose them to; and that such Expressions are intended to signify no more, than the *Practice of Sin*, and the general Prevalence of it amongst Men, whatever the immediate Cause or Occasion of it be. And the same may be affirmed of the *Punishment* threatned in Scripture to be inflicted in a future State on finally impenitent Sinners. The particular Expressions upon this Head, are generally figurative. But one Thing is very clear throughout the whole Scripture, that the unerring Rule of Justice shall be so strictly and impartially observed in the final Judgment, that the whole World shall approve it, and the Sinner himself be forced to confess it. Can there be any Doubt, after such an open Declaration, how any obscure or figurative Passages are to be understood? With regard therefore to the Explication of Scripture upon the Subject now before us, and as an Answer to any Objections drawn from modern Schemes of Divinity, I lay down the following Rules.

First, It is evident from a cursory View of the Old and New Testament, that they are miscellaneous Books containing great Variety of Things, and taking in a large Compass of Time; some Parts of which are History, others writ in a poetical Style, and others prophetic: But the Design of them all is personally to recommend the Practice of true Religion and Virtue. It is with this View therefore that we are to understand any Expression contained in them. This Method we naturally take with respect to all other Books. No one reads a Treatise of Philosophy, but he expects to find that the Terms mentioned there, be used in a philosophical Sense; and accordingly he always apprehends them so. But if in such a Treatise, there should *incidentally* be brought in something upon a different Subject, and described according to the *vulgar* Way of speaking, without any regard to *philosophical* Truth; he would not pretend to explain such an occasional Discourse, in the same Manner as he did the rest of the Book. And the like holds true with regard to the Scriptures. They are not Books of Metaphysics and Philosophy, designed to entertain Mens Curiosity with nice Speculations; but they are Books of Religion and Morality, calculated for the Regulation of Mens Behaviour and Practice. And because no Language abounds with Words sufficient to express the Particulars of all Sciences, therefore some of them must necessarily be used in different Senses, as they relate to different Subjects. The common People, in those Things they are conversant about, and have Occasion to take Notice of, express Things as they appear to the Senses, and not as what in Strictness and Reality they are: Which is sufficient for the Purposes of Life. But whoever would enquire into the Truth of such Things, and examine the Foundation of such Appearances, must express himself very differently. Therefore there must be both a *vulgar* and *philosophical* Way of expressing the same Thing; which whoever confounds or misapplies, immediately introduces innumerable Absurdities. These Distinctions have place in the forementioned Books; and the not attending to these Distinctions, has rendred many Things there utterly unintelligible, and others contrary to Fact and Experience. For want of attending hereto, some Persons have laboured under inextricable Difficulties, how to reconcile some of the most certain Truths in the natural System of the World, such as the Motion of the Earth, and the like, with the Representation made of them in Scripture: Whereas upon this single Supposition, that the Scripture is a Book of *Morality* and not of *Philosophy*, it ought to be very exact in conforming all its Words and Expressions to the *moral* or *religious* Sense of them; but the other being foreign to this Subject, and only occasionally introduced, there is no need of such Accuracy in them, but they *may* safely, nay, it would be absurd if they should *not* be delivered according to the vulgar Acceptation of Words, as not being at all intended to inform Men in those Matters. Every Difficulty upon this Account immediately vanishes.

Secondly, The Scriptures being, as was before observed, Books of Morality and Religion; it is evident that the Business of them must be to lay down the great Rules and Precepts of Vertue, to show the Obligation Men are under to pay Obedience

That the Scripture is a miscellaneous Book, treating of great Variety of Subjects.

The general Design of the Scripture is to recommend Morality.

Clarke. dience to these Rules, and to recommend them with proper Motives and Inducements. Wherefore they take it for granted, that *Man* is a Subject of Morality; and consequently they *suppose* him to be a Creature indued with *Understanding*, whereby he is capable of apprehending the different Relations of Persons and Things; that he is also endued with a Power of *acting* or *not acting*, after he has formed a Judgment of what is fittest to be done; which is *Free-Will* or *Liberty*. And also that he has in him the Principles of Passion, Hope, and Fear and the like, which may be excited by Promises and Threats. All the Directions contained in them, are manifestly calculated for such a Sort of Being as this; which if *Man* is not, he is wholly out of the Question; they do not then concern him; but his Case is, what the Royal Psalmist says of a Horse and a Mule, *He must be held with a Bit and a Bridle, lest he fall on us*. It cannot therefore be expected, that nice Definitions should be given of the several Powers and Faculties which are in Men, or their Differences exactly laid down; nor ought we to imagine that there should be particular philosophical Proof of the Existence of such different Powers in the same Subject, or curious Disquisitions into the Cause and Origin of them, or the Manner of their Operation; because these Things are all foreign to the Purpose. So that all Questions of this Kind, *viz.* Whether *Man* be an intelligent and voluntary Agent; how *Liberty* can be reconciled with the divine *Prescience*, and the like; cannot be determined from Scripture, because it meddles not at all with them. Every Thing there relates to Practice, and whatever the Theory be, so it affects not *that*, it is all one. Hence it is that we do not so much as find those Words, *Necessity*, *Liberty*, and such like, at all used in those Books, at least not in the philosophick Sense of them; but *Man* is described according to the vulgar and common Apprehension concerning him. Thus it is said, *That out of the Heart proceed evil Thoughts, Murders, Adulteries, and the like*; as if the *Heart* were the Seat of the Understanding. And St. Paul, agreeably to the received Notion, distinguishes *Man* into two Parts, the *Flesh* and the *Spirit*, as containing different Principles, and governed by different Laws, *But I see* (or *I experience*) *another Law in my Members, warring against the Law of my Mind*. The Truth or Force of both which Discourses, is not at all diminished, if it should appear, upon philosophical Enquiry, that the *Heart* is not, properly speaking, the Seat of the Understanding; or that there might have been a more accurate Distinction than that of the Apostles into *Flesh* and *Spirit*. It is no wonder, when Men read the Scripture with such a View as this, that they should be disappointed; and then triumph in an Absurdity, which is of their own making. Such Persons might with as just Reason expect, in an experimental Treatise of Light and Colours, wherein only the different Properties and Effects of them are considered, to find particular Proofs, that Men are endued with the Faculty of Seeing; and then ridicule it, because it does not answer their foolish Expectation; whereas that was foreign to the Subject, and no Part of the Design.

God is supposed in Scripture to be the Governor of the World.

Thirdly, THE Scriptures containing in them a Body of Laws or Precepts, for the Regulation of Mens Behaviour in Matters of Religion; it was proper there to consider Men only as Subjects, as under the Authority of a Lawgiver and a Judge. Wherefore, though these Laws are founded in the eternal Nature and Reason of Things, this is not particularly insisted upon; but they are recommended in a way of Authority, and by such Motives as are peculiar to that, *viz.* by Rewards and Punishments. In the same Manner as in temporal Kingdoms, the supreme Authority does not undertake to offer Reason and Arguments to convince the Subjects of the Goodness and Excellency of the Laws; for this is always supposed; but only enjoins them positively, with proper Punishments annexed to the transgressing of them. So is it here. God is in Scripture considered as the Governor of the World, and all Mankind as his *Subjects* or *Servants*; and upon this Relation is founded all their religious *Duty* or *Allegiance*. They are obliged to *obey*, because he commands; so that his *Will* is the Rule, and his *Authority* the Ground of their Obedience. Hence it is that in Scripture we find no particular Proofs of the Existence of God, no Demonstrations of his metaphysical Nature and Essence; because these are not the Foundation of the Worship there prescribed. For the same

same Reason likewise we never here find *moral Virtue* or *Vice* treated of in the same Manner as in other Writers. But as they are here considered as arising from a different Principle, so they have a different Denomination given them. Every Thing here is referred to God, as the original Author and continual Preserver of all Things; and *they* are represented as the Effects of his mere Good Will and Liberality. Wherefore with this View, *Gifts* and *Graces*, and *Talents*, and such like, are the most proper Expressions, to give us right Apprehensions concerning them; and so we find them perpetually called. The *Faculties* and *Powers* of Mens Minds, as they are derived from God, are his free Gift; which he was under no Obligation originally to bestow, or any longer to continue, than as his own Goodness prompted, and Wisdom directs: And every Instance of Help, every Means of Assistance, natural or supernatural, is the Effect of mere Grace or Favour, which Men have no Right to demand. In the Scripture-Account therefore of the Original of *Moral Evil*, we must expect such a Representation of it, as is agreeable to the professed Design of these Books, *viz.* to show the Relation and Dependence Men have upon the Supreme Being; and not a strict philosophical Account, such as a curious Enquirer into the Works of Nature would give. Not but that *both these* are perfectly agreeable, and indeed are the strongest possible Illustration and Confirmation of each other: But different Ends must be attained by diverse Means, though the Truth be always one and the same. Thus Notions of the Perfections of God, taken from the Observation of the visible Part of the Creation, illustrate and confirm those given us of him in Scripture; and the Obligation to the Practice of Virtue, drawn from the Reason and Relations of Persons and Things, is exactly coincident with that of Revelation, and they are only like different Ways which lead to the same End.

Fourthly, THE Foundation of Religion and Virtue being laid in the Mind and Heart; the secret Dispositions, and genuine Acts of which, are invisible, and known only to a Man's self; therefore the Powers and Operations of the Mind can only be expressed in figurative Terms, and signified by external Symbols. The Motives also and Inducements to Practice, are spiritual; such as affect Men in a Way of moral Influence, and not of natural Efficiency; the principal of which, are drawn from the Consideration of a future State: And consequently *these* likewise must be represented by Allegories and Similitudes, taken from Things most known and familiar here. And thus we find in Scripture, the State of Religion illustrated by all the beautiful Images that we can conceive; in which natural Unity, Order, and Harmony consist, as regulated by the strictest and most exact Rules of Discipline, taken from those observed in the best ordered temporal Governments. In the Interpretation of Places, in which any of these Images are contained, the principal Regard is to be had, to the figurative or spiritual, and not to the literal Sense of the Words. From not attending to which, have arisen all the absurd Doctrines and Inferences which weak Men have endeavoured to establish as Scripture-Truths: Whereas in the other Method of Explication, the Things are plain and easy to every one's Capacity, make the deepest and most lasting Impressions upon their Minds, and have the greatest Influence on their Practice. Of this Nature are all the Rites and Ceremonies prescribed to the *Jews*, with relation to the external Form of religious Worship; every one of which was intended to show the Obligation, or recommend the Practice of some moral Duty, and was esteemed of no farther Use than as it produced that Effect. And the same may be applied to the Rewards and Punishments peculiar to the Christian Dispensation, which regard a future State: The Rewards are set forth by such Things as the Generality of Men take the greatest Delight, and place their highest Satisfaction of this Life in; and the Punishments are such as are inflicted by humane Laws upon the worst Malefactors: But they can neither of them be understood in the *strictly literal* Sense, but only by way of Analogy, and corresponding in the general Nature and Intention of the Thing, though very different in Kind.

*The Use of
Figures
and Meta-
phors in
Scripture.*

Clarke.
Particular
Rites and
Customs
frequently
alluded to
in Scrip-
ture.

Lastly, As all Nations have their peculiar Rites and Customs, in Religious as well as Civil Matters; and as every Language has its peculiar Propriety and Idiom of Speech; it is impossible to understand a Discourse relating to a particular People, without some previous Knowledge of the Nature of each of these. The *Jews*, for whose Use the Books of the Old Testament were chiefly composed, were a People distinct by themselves, who had very little Correspondence or Communication with the neighbouring Nations. Wherefore their Opinions and Doctrines in Religion, must be learned from those Writings, and what Histories remain of those Times; by comparing the Expressions of different Texts with each other; and not from the Interpretation they will bear, compared with other Languages, in Countries whose Customs are very different from theirs. Thus with regard to the Practice of Virtue, and the Commission of Sin; the fundamental Principle of *their* Religion, is, that there is but One God, the Original Creator of Heaven and Earth; by whose Care and Providence, every Thing in them is maintained and preserved; who is infinitely Wise, and Just, and Good. From the Consideration of this strict Connexion betwixt the Creator and the Creature, that they might not derogate too much from Him, nor assume too much to themselves, they ascribed every Thing that was Good or Vertuous to God; not only the Powers and Faculties of their Minds, but even their voluntary Actions themselves. So likewise, because there is mention made of certain Angels or superiour Spirits, the Head or Captain of which is called the *Devil* or *Satan*; by whose Example, and at whose Instance, they committed very heinous Sins against God, by which they incurred his just Displeasure, and were punished in an exemplary manner: Hence the *Jews* were led to ascribe all *Sin* or *Evil* to Him, as if He suggested every wicked Thought, and disposed every prevailing Temptation to seduce them into Sin. Upon this Supposition, their Forms of Speech in the Old Testament are very plain and intelligible; and the *same Thing*, under divers Considerations, may be said in one Place to have God for its Author, and in another Place be attributed to the Devil; as in the Case of King *David's* numbering the People. With regard to the New Testament, nothing can be more evident, than that, though it be wrote in a different Language from that of the Old Testament, yet, as the same People were principally concerned in it, so it is in every Thing exactly conformable to their Notions. The Idioms of Speech are the same; every Doctrine or Action is illustrated by some Customs which were familiar amongst them. Wherefore in order to the right understanding of the Description of any Thing, or the Character of any Person, or the like, it is necessary to have recourse to the Old Testament, and to examine in what Sense the Phrases are there used, and how applied. Thus in the Instance of the Punishment threatned to be inflicted on finally impenitent Sinners in a future State; all the particular *Circumstances* of it, as the *Place*, the *Degrees*, &c. are taken from the known Practices of the *Jews*, and consequently ought to be explained by the Usages in the Passages they refer to. These are the principal Rules with regard to the Interpretation of Scripture; which it was necessary to lay down, in order to obviate some Difficulties relating to this Subject of *Moral Evil*, which are founded wholly upon Explications of Texts of Scripture in a manner unwarrantable, either by common Reason, or by the Method of understanding any other Books; and in order to show, that the Account there given, of the present State and Condition of Man, and the Method of Providence in its Dispensations towards Him, is perfectly agreeable to the clearest Ideas we have of *Good* and *Evil*, and the several Obligations that a *free* and *intelligent* Agent can be conceived to be under, to conform to the one, and to avoid the other in the general Course of his Action.

From not
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HAD the foregoing Rules, with regard to the Interpretation of Scripture, been observed in this Enquiry into the Cause and Original of moral Evil; all those *Insinuations* of our *Objector* concerning the Authority and Genuineness of Scripture, and the Absurdity He charges the Doctrines of it with, had been entirely prevented. For it is with these Books, as with all other Things, that by a right Application may be of Use and Service to Mankind: They are in their own Nature liable to be misapplied, which must produce the contrary Effects; and the greater and

and more universal the Benefit or Advantages that accrue from the right Use of them are, the more Instances must there necessarily be, in which they are capable of being abused to the Evil and Disservice of Mankind. This is the Foundation of all those unreasonable and contradictory Doctrines, wherewith weak or designing Men have imposed upon themselves and others, as if they were contained in Scripture. The Consequences of which Practice have been very pernicious to true Religion, and have greatly tended to diminish the Authority of those sacred Writings. For by this single Artifice, have prophane Persons and Unbelievers in every Age, attempted to undermine the Truth and Excellency of the Gospel, viz. not taking Things as they are there delivered, and impartially enquiring into the Nature and Consequences of them, but pitching upon some particular Scheme of Doctrines invented by Men; and when they have sufficiently exposed the Weakness of these, and confuted the Defenders of them, then they immediately argue from the Fictions of Men to the Doctrines of Scripture, and appeal to the Illiterate and Vulgar, (who are unable to judge of the Dispute,) whether they have not effectually disproved the Scripture-Doctrines themselves. This is a very disingenuous way of treating any Book whatsoever, and very ill becomes a Person who pretends to philosophize and to enquire seriously after Truth. And it is so much the worse, as the Things searched for, are of the greatest Importance and Concern to all Men to be satisfied in. Such Fallacy as this, may serve a particular End or private View for a Time; but when once discovered, it must have the contrary Effect to what it was designed for. The real Truth will be more strengthened, and the Absurdity will light upon the Head of the Opposer, in the Eyes of all discerning Persons. This we shall find to be the Case in the Subject before us. We are often told that the Origin both of natural and moral Evil, can no way be accounted for by the Principles of Reason; that it is directly repugnant to the clearest Ideas we have of Order; and that to have recourse to Scripture, is only to shelter ourselves under an Authority, which though not to be opposed, yet gives us no real Satisfaction. Thus after a long Enquiry we find the whole reduced to this (as it is styled) *useful Conclusion*, viz. *to humble the Reason of Men, by showing them with what Force the most foolish Heresies, such as those of the Manichees, may confound and embroil the most fundamental Truths.*—*What must be done then? Men must captivate their Understandings to the Obedience of Faith, and never dispute about some Things; particularly, they must not oppose the Manichees, but by Scripture and by the Principle of Submission.* And in another Place *The Origin of Evil, the Decrees of God upon it, and the like are one of the most inconceivable Mysteries of Christianity.* What he means by *Mystery*, he tells us a little before, where he has these Words: *The most necessary Barrier to preserve the Christian Religion, is the Obligation to submit to the Authority of God, and humbly to believe the Mysteries that he has been pleased to reveal, however inconceivable and impossible they appear to our Reason.* This (in the Sense the Author here plainly means it,) is to ridicule the first Principles both of *Natural* and *Revealed* Knowledge; and to drive Men to the most compleat Scepticism and Infidelity.

THE true Inference that can be drawn from such Enquiries with respect to *Natural Knowledge*, is no more than this; that the Capacities of Men are very shallow and the Means of finding out Truth few, compared with that infinite Variety of Relations that Things bear to each other; so that the most enlarged Understanding must oftentimes be at a Loss, and not able peremptorily to determine one way or another. But this is so far from teaching us *that absurd sort of Hu-*

The Weakness and Folly of such Misapplications of Scripture.

^r See Bayle's *Dict.* under the Word *Pauliciens*, Remark F. Il est plus utile qu'on ne pense, d'humilier la raison de l'homme, en lui montrant avec quelle force les Heresies plus folles, comme sont celles des Manicheens, se jouent de ses lumieres, pour embrouiller les veritez les plus capitales.——Que faut-il donc faire? il faut captiver son entendement sous l'obeissance de la foi, & ne disputer jamais sur certaines choses. En particulier il ne faut combattre les Manicheens que par l'Ecriture & par le principe de la soumission, &c.

^q *Eclaircissement sur les Manicheens.*——Que l'origine du mal, les decrets de Dieu sur cela, & le reste, sont un des plus inconcevables mysteres du Christianisme.

^r De sorte que la barriere la plus necessaire à conserver la religion de Jesus Christ, est l'obligation de se soumettre à l'autorité de Dieu, & à croire humblement les Mysteres qu'il lui a plu de nous reveler quelque inconcevables qu'ils soient, & quelque impossibles qu'ils paroissent à nôtre raison. Which he represents as a common Maxim agreed upon by all Divines, Catholics and Protestants.

mility

Clarke. *mility* now mentioned, whereby we should renounce our Understandings either in Intuitive Knowledge, or clear Deductions; that directly on the contrary, it teaches us to place entire Confidence in those Truths, the Evidence of which is plain and satisfactory; and encourages us to pursue others that are more intricate, with all our Diligence; and gives us hopes of the like Success even in these also. Let us apply this way of arguing, in a parallel Case more familiar to us; and the Weakness and Folly of it, will be yet more conspicuous. The Case is the same with the Faculties of the Mind, as with the bodily Senses: *Objects* may be so placed, either as to their Distance or the Magnitude of their Parts, that the nicest Eye, assisted by all the Improvements of Art, cannot discern either their Shape or their Colour; and *Sounds* may be so blended together, that the most curious Ear cannot distinguish them. This, in the Words of our Author, is of very good Use, to *humble the Senses* of Men, by showing them with what Force such *foolish Experiments* confound and embroil the plain Evidence of their Senses, and make them deny or doubt of all Things. A Man who can be convinced in this Manner that he is really blind or deaf, or that there can be no Case in which it is safe for him to trust to his Eyes or Ears, because there are many Cases in which he may be deceived; is beyond the Power of Arguments, and so must be left to reap the Fruit of his Folly. Had this *notable* Use of our Faculties been made by the great Men of this Age; instead of those noble Improvements that we now see in Mathematicks and Philosophy, which convince us more and more every Day of the Certainty and Excellency of such Knowledge, an universal Negligence and Contempt of those Studies would have prevailed; and we had been as ignorant of the Works of Nature and the Beauty of the Creation, as the most barbarous and uncivilized Nations are.

Now the Weakness of this sort of arguing, is just the same when applied to the *Scripture-Account* of Things, as when applied to *natural Reason*. It only shows that they who make use of it, have not seriously nor carefully examined into the *one* or the *other*; but have taken up with some Hypothesis, which upon a near View appeared inconsistent and unworthy of God; and then they condemned his *Works* or his *Word*, because not agreeing with the Fictions of Men. Thus it is with the forementioned Words, *Mystery* and *Faith*. There is a Sense in which both these Words have been used by the modern Schoolmen, which it is very hard to reconcile with the Reason of Things, and the natural Notions we have of God; but then it is altogether as difficult to reconcile it with the plain and express Words of Scripture; so that the Truth or Excellency of the Scripture is not at all affected thereby, but only those Authors themselves and their Defenders. We find no Command in Scripture to lay aside our Reason or *Understandings*, but directly the contrary is there affirmed of the Christian Religion, *viz.* that it is our *reasonable Service*: And therefore the Method in which Christ and his Apostles taught *this Service*, was agreeable to Reason, *viz.* by exhorting Men to *attend seriously, to weigh diligently* their Doctrines and Precepts; *to search the Scriptures* whether the Things were so; *to try the Spirits whether they were of God*, and to examine the Evidence for their Authority and Mission. Are these and such like Expressions at all calculated to enslave Mens Understandings, or to induce a blind and implicit Obedience? Such Methods may serve the Purposes of Superstition, but true Religion can gain nothing by them. Neither do we find mentioned in Scripture any such *Obligation* as our Author speaks of, of receiving Things that appear impossible to right Reason. Indeed the direct contrary is there asserted, *viz.* that to Christians *it is given to understand the Mysteries of the Kingdom of God*; and *the Mystery that has been hid from all Ages is now made known*. It is impossible for Words to be more plain and explicit than these are; so that nothing less than a total Ignorance of those Writings, on a most inveterate Prejudice and Obstinacy against them, could be the Cause of such shameful Abuses.

The Scripture-Notion of Faith. THE Scripture-Notion of *Faith*, is very plain and obvious, *viz.* not a speculative and philosophical, but a religious and practical Faith. And 'tis built upon this Principle, *That God is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* Heb. xi. 6. That is, religious Faith is a full Conviction of Mind, that an eternal, immense Being,

Being, infinitely Wise, Just and Good, not only actually exists, but is the Governor of the World, prescribes Laws to the Consciences and to the Actions of Men, takes Notice of their Compliance with or Transgression of them, and will certainly reward or punish them, according as their Works have been. To live under this Sense and Expectation, is to live a Life of Faith, and is coincident with a Life of Virtue. All the Species or particular Instances of Faith may be reduced to this, as so many Branches springing from it. And to explain them in any other Sense, as if Faith and Reason were opposed to each other, and Religion and Virtue were two different Things; is to blind Mens Understandings, and to confound the plainest and most numerous Texts of Scripture.

THE same may be said of the Word *Mystery*. Our Author takes it in a Sense never used in the Scriptures; shows the Absurdity of such *Mysteries*, and then insults those Writings for what is no where contain'd in them. A Revelation, in the Nature of the Thing, supposes that something with regard to Religion should be discovered to Mankind, which they could not find out, or at least be certain of, by the Light of Nature and Reason, viz. either a new Obligation to perform their Duty, or the Addition of some new positive Precepts, or a clearer Manifestation of what was before obscure, whencesoever that Obscurity arose, &c. These and such like, are in Scripture styled *Mysteries*; not because they are contrary to, or above our Reason, and in their own Nature inconceivable by our Understandings; but because they are such Things as Men could not have found out; or been fully assured of by their Reason, because they depend on the mere Will and good Pleasure of God: They are Super-additions to the common Benefits he has given Mankind by the established Course of Nature, and therefore are esteemed extraordinary Acts of Grace and Favour. These, when once made known, are as easy to be apprehended and applied by the Capacities of all Men, as their natural Gifts and Endowments are; and are so far from being inconsistent with them, that they are only like a Superstructure, of a Piece with, and built upon, the same Foundation. The Objections therefore raised from the modern Sense of this Word, which is wholly unknown to Scripture, are very weak and foolish, and only discover the Wickedness of Men, in attempting to impose on one another's Understandings, but do not at all affect the Truths themselves that are revealed. And to appeal to the Books themselves, whether any such Things be contained in them or no, is the most effectual Confutation of such Calumnies.

OF a Piece with these, are the same Author's Quotations of those Texts of *Isaiah* and *St. Paul*, *Isaiah* lv. 9. *For my Thoughts are not your Thoughts, neither are your Ways my Ways, saith the Lord.* And *Rom. xi. 33.* *O the Depth of the Riches both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God: How unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding out!* The former of which is alledged to show that Men cannot at all judge of the Intentions or Methods of Providence, nor see wherein the Goodness and Excellency of them consist; and the latter, that St. Paul himself proposed Difficulties, which he could not get out of, otherwise than by asserting the absolute Power of God over his Creatures, with an Exclamation of the Incomprehensibility of his Ways. Nothing can strike more directly at the Root of all Religion, both natural and revealed, than to assert, that Wisdom and Justice and Goodness in God, are of another Nature and Kind, than the moral Qualities so denominated in Men; and consequently that they can no way be compared together, nor any Judgment formed of them. If this were so, there would be no Foundation in the Nature and Reason of Things for Truth and Falshood, Right and Wrong, which are the everlasting Rules to which the Supreme Being conforms himself; but equal and unequal, and all Proportions whatsoever, would be alike, and might be put one for another. Which is such a Contradiction, as he who pretends not to be able to see, can no more be shown it, than the Difference of Colours can be shown to a Man that is blind. And there would

^f See Bayle's *Discourse of the Manichees*.

^t Les écrits de Saint Paul nous apprennent que ce grand Apôtre proposé les difficultez de la predestination, ne s'en tira que par le droit absolu de Dieu sur toutes les creatures, & que par une exclamation sur l'incomprehensibilité des voies de Dieu.

Clarke. be no Foundation for those Exhortations in Scripture, so often repeated and so strongly urged, to *imitate* the Perfections of God; to be *Followers* of him; and the like; which would be only empty Sounds without any certain Meaning. This is just the same Thing, as it would be in a Person who saw the Force of a Demonstration in a plain Proposition in Mathematicks, to affirm that in a more difficult Proposition (the Relation of the several Parts of which to each other he does not see) *Proportion* itself is quite another Thing from what it is in the other. God Almighty sees at one View all the *Relations* that *Persons* and *Things* bear to each other; and therefore he exercises that Wisdom and Justice and Goodness which is founded on those Relations, in the most exact Manner that is possible. Men see the same Relations but faintly, compare them together but slightly, and many Times neglect or overlook some of the principal of them. Because therefore they fall short of Perfection in those Virtues, does it follow that they are no Virtues at all? Because these Virtues differ infinitely in degree in Men, from what they are in the Supreme Being; are they therefore totally different in kind? It may as well be affirmed that the Light of a Candle is in kind totally different from that of the Sun, and such as would give a Man no Idea of *Light at all*, if he had not seen the other; because there is an immense Disproportion in Intensity betwixt them. Also that an Instance of Mercy shewn by one Man to another, is a quite different sort of Thing from the Exercise of that Attribute in God; because the Degree, Extent or Duration, are infinitely disproportioned. 'Tis manifest that the Foundation is one and the same; and the Rule existing in the Nature of Things, external and immutable. And thus it is explained in the fore-mentioned Passages of Scripture themselves; which could not have been so shamefully misunderstood, but by the Perverseness and Obstinacy of Men; for the Words immediately following the former Text, as an Illustration of it, are these, *For as the Heavens are higher than the Earth, so are my Ways higher than your Ways, and my Thoughts than your Thoughts.* Which manifestly regards the *Universality* and *Extent* only, and not the *Nature* and *Reason* of the Things, which are eternal and unchangeable supposing the Things here mentioned to be of the same *Kind*. But if these latter Words are only a Continuation and particular Exemplification of what is said in the 7th Verse, *Let the Wicked forsake his Way, and the unrighteous Man his Thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have Mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon*; then the Meaning of them is evidently this: That there is the greatest Difference possible, betwixt the *Thoughts* and *Actions* of God, and the *Thoughts* and *Actions* of wicked Men; and therefore there can be no Reconciliation betwixt them, no room for Mercy and Pardon, without Repentance and Reformation: Which is a Notion perfectly agreeable to natural Reason. And St. Paul's Exclamation does no less evidently relate to the extraordinary Methods of Providence, or the particular Benefits or Favours, whether temporal or spiritual, conferred voluntarily on one People above others, and to which they had no natural Right, but they are a free Addition to the common Benefits of Providence, as in the Case of the *Jews*. The Apostle's Words intimate no more than this; that as such Mercies are voluntary, and proceed solely from the good Pleasure of God, so they must all be resolved into his Will; it is impossible for any Wisdom of Man, or perhaps any other created Beings, to find out the Reason of them, or to determine on whom they shall be particularly conferred. Nothing but Revelation can discover these Things; after which they become as obvious as any other Things discovered by our natural Knowledge.

I HAVE been thus particular in stating the true Rules of interpreting the Phrases of Scripture, and in giving some Instances of our Adversaries Method of quoting and explaining them; that it might the more plainly appear, what sort of Assistance it is reasonable to expect from thence, in this Enquiry concerning the Origin of Moral Evil; and also that it might appear, how unfairly the Scriptures are treated, and how shamefully they have been misapplied on this very Subject.

Of the distinct Powers and Faculties of Man.

I SHALL now pursue the Method I at first laid down, by considering distinctly the *Powers, Faculties* or *Perfections* which belong particularly to *Man*, and the *Degree*

Degree and Extent of them. The Case is the same with Intelligent Beings, and the *Clarke.* Faculties they are endued with, as in *material* Things and the Powers belonging unto them. We come to the Knowledge of the Existence of them by Experience and Observation only; and these ought to be the Foundation of our reasoning concerning them, as they are concerning Truths in natural Philosophy. Every Creature that is possible to be made, is equally the Object of Omnipotence; but whether it shall actually *exist* or no, with the particular Circumstances of *Time* and *Place*, this belongs to the other Perfections of the Deity to determine. And the like may be said of the Faculties and Powers they are to be endued with, both as to their *Kind* and *Degree*, if they be not incompatible with the Nature of the Subject, or do not imply any Contradiction. Wherefore as *Space* is immense, and *Duration* eternal; God who is infinite in Power, Wisdom and Goodness, and all other Perfections, may of his own good Pleasure chuse, out of the infinite Variety of Beings that are possible to exist, *which* and *how many* of them shall actually exist, and allot them their respective Stations, and prescribe them such Laws as are most conducive to their general well-being. Agreeably to this Notion we find *that small Part* of the Universe, in which we ourselves are conversant, and have the best Means of knowing its State and Condition; we find it to be plentifully stock'd with several Species of Creatures very different from each other, when compared together; having each their peculiar Ends and Uses, and in such a Subordination as their respective Natures would best admit of. And that other Parts of the Universe should be replenished with Beings of a still Superior Order, is very reasonable to conjecture, from the Harmony and Analogy of Nature; besides what is said in Scripture of Angels and other Superior Powers. The Fountain is inexhaustible, and there is room for the Exercise of the Perfections of the Deity in every such Manner and in all such Degrees as he himself thinks fit to display them. The highest Species of Creatures here upon Earth is *Man*, whom the Royal Psalmist gives an exact Description of, *Thou hast made him a little* *Psal. viii.* *lower than the Angels, and hast crowned him with Glory and Honour, thou madest* *5, 6.* *him to have Dominion over the Works of thy Hands, thou hast put all Things under his Feet.* It is necessary to have a true Notion what sort of Creature Man is, what Place he professes in the Universe, and what Relation he stands in to other Beings; before we can judge wherein his proper Excellency consists, or what his chief End or final Good is. He is usually and very properly distinguished into two constituent Parts, Body and Soul; as *Gen. ii. 7.* *And the Lord God formed Man of the Dust of the Ground, and breathed into his Nostrils the Breath of Life, and Man became a living Soul.* The one he has in common with the inferior Creatures, and in the other he resembles the superior Intelligences. And under this general Distinction of *Matter* and *Spirit*, is comprehended the whole of what we know of the Universe; each of them having Properties peculiar to themselves, which cannot belong to the other; whence they appear to have entirely different *Substances* or *Essences*, though we have no distinct or clear Idea of *them*. Each of these hath Place in the Composition of *Man*: They are very closely united together in him, and have a mutual Dependence upon, and continually influence each other. The former of these, *viz. the Body*, or *Man* considered only as a Creature endued with *animal Life*, has been treated of in the former Discourses; that it might appear, what *Imperfections* or *Evils* he is incident to, as a necessary Consequence of the original Principles of such Creatures, and the Laws they are subject to. Thus the *Matter* of which the humane *Body* is formed, not differing from the common Dust of the Earth, is subject to the same Laws of Motion with that, and must produce the like Effects. The *Structure* of its Parts likewise, being the same as that of Plants, requiring perpetual Nourishment; the Principle of *Vegetation* is here necessary also, and this is attended with its peculiar Consequences and Effects. And the *Frame* of the whole Body, being like that of all other animated Creatures, stands in need of that natural *Instinct* from whence proceed all its Passions and Affections, which have their *Irregularities*, and are capable of *Abuses* likewise.

THAT

Clarke. *Of the Mind and its Faculties and Powers.* THAT which remains now to be considered, is the *Soul* or *Mind* of Man, what *Powers* and *Faculties* it is endued with, what *Laws* or *Rules* it is subject to; that we may see what *Imperfections* and *Evils* may arise from hence, which will take in the Whole of what I at first proposed. The Mind, though it be but one simple uniform intelligent Substance, yet is it endowed with several *Powers* and *Faculties*, which are denominated from the different Objects, or diverse Manners of the Exercise of them. For it is with the *Rational* Nature, just as with the *Animal* Nature; the Principle of *Life* is one and the same, though the Modes of Sensation or Feeling are different, according to the respective Organs of the Body through which it is conveyed, and the different Impressions of external Objects upon them: And so also is the Principle of *Reason* one and the same, though differently distinguished in the Application of it. The first and most general of these Powers of the Mind, is *Perception*: By which it takes Notice of those Objects which are presented to it. And in This the Mind is so far passive, that for the most part it cannot help such Notice; its Perception is only a bare Reception of the Impressions made upon it by external Objects. But it has moreover a Power of *retaining* and, when it pleases, *recalling* those Impressions or Ideas, and of comparing them with each other, and seeing whether they have any Relation or Dependance, or be disagreeable and unconnected one with another; and then, by putting them together, of forming a Judgment of the Whole. And this is in a good measure *voluntary*; it depends upon a Man's Will, whether such Objects shall be long retained, or often recalled; and so does likewise the Exactness or Intenseness of his viewing them, and finding out their Properties and Relations: But after this, the Judgment that he forms of them, or the Truths which result from such Comparisons, are necessary and such as He cannot avoid seeing. The last Property of the Mind is the Power of *acting* or *conforming* itself to that Judgment, which it has made in Things relating to Mens Behaviour towards, and Conversation with others. And in this, properly, *Freedom*^v or *Liberty* consists; in the being able to act, or to forbear acting, after seeing what is fittest to be done. These are the principal Faculties of the Mind of Man and the Manner of their Operation; and in *These* is laid the Foundation of all Knowledge, both natural and moral. Concerning the Truth and Certainty of these Faculties, we can only appeal to every Man's own Experience, and bid him examine within himself, and see if he does not find these Principles in his Breast, and if he does not naturally proceed in this Method. But the Degrees of these are very different, in different Persons of the same Order, and in different Orders of Beings. For we observe amongst Men, that the intellectual Powers, Capacities and Faculties of some, are much larger and more acute than *those* of others; and we have reason to think, that in Angels and other still superiour Creatures, they are more universally extensive; there being no Bounds to be set to the Possibilities of the Exercise of the infinite Creator's Power, with respect to the Existence of such Beings. On the other hand, in those Creatures which are inferiour to Man, but are yet endued with animal Life; there are plain Marks of such kind of Powers and Capacities as are in Men, though in a lower Degree, and in very different Proportions in those Creatures themselves. The Power of simple Perception is evident in them all; they being capable of receiving and taking Notice of the Impressions of external Objects, by Means of their several bodily Senses, in the same manner as we do, and some of them with much greater Quickness and Sagacity. The Power of Judgment, or of comparing Things together, and of seeing Truth and Falshood, they seem not to have at all; but only to determine themselves by the Agreeableness or Disagreeableness of those Objects which are immediately present to them. But as to the *Self-motive* Power, 'tis evident they are possessed of that; for nothing can more plainly appear than this, in every Thing we see them do. But because they have not the Power of abstract Reasoning, nor the same Understanding and Sense of Moral Good and Evil, which is in Men; therefore we call it generally *Spontaneity*. These are

^v Ἐξούσιον, ἢ ἡ ἀρχὴ ἐν τῇ ποιήσει καὶ πράξει. *Arist. Eth. Lib. III. cap. 2.*

the principal Powers and Faculties which we observe in all intelligent Creatures, *Clarke.*
but particularly in Man.

THERE are, besides these, several Dispositions and Inclinations, which it is likewise necessary to consider, in order to a thorough Knowledge of the Nature of Man. Not only *That Sense of Moral Good and Evil*, which arises from *Understanding*, is apparent in Men; but they have also a *Natural Inclination* to Moral Good; they are *disposed* by their Original Frame and Constitution, to act according to the eternal and unalterable Rules of it. These Inclinations and Dispositions of the Mind, are by the Heathen Moralists made the first Principles from whence every good and virtuous Action proceeds; and they distinguished them into four Sorts, corresponding to the four Cardinal Virtues. The first of which, is *That Desire after Truth* which appears from the Curiosity Men have, when they are at leisure from worldly Affairs, to enquire into Things difficult and abstruse; and the Satisfaction they have in them, when found out. The next is a *Love of Society*, which can no otherwise be maintained but by universal Justice and Fidelity towards every Man. The Third is, a *Sense of Honour and Dignity*, which is seen in those Heroick Actions, which Men are ready to perform on all Occasions, whatever Hazards or Dangers they are exposed to. The Last is, a Sense likewise of *Order and Decency* in all our Words and Actions, which renders them not only agreeable but beautiful to the Understanding. These are the principal Dispositions of Mind, which the wise Author of Nature has more or less planted in every Man.

Of the natural Dispositions of the Mind.

THERE are yet *Other Inclinations* which arise from the *Body*, and which are the Foundation of the several Passions in Men. Those of them which are necessary to preserve Life and Health, and which Men have in common with the inferior Creatures, and are the Effects of mere sensitive Nature; such as Hunger and Thirst, Cold and Weariness, and the like; have been formerly examined into. But the same Principles have a different Effect upon an Intelligent and Rational Creature; and therefore with respect to such, must be considered in another View. We need only to consult the Motions of our own Breasts, or to make a slight Reflection upon the Actions of Others, to be sufficiently convinced of the Nature of human Passions and Affections, of the great Strength and powerful Effects of them. The Instances of Love and Hatred, Hope and Fear, Anger and Complacency, and the like, are so common and obvious, that they stand in need of no Proof; 'tis the Application or Misapplication, the Use or Abuse of them, that wants to be considered and explained. In inferior Creatures, these Passions and Affections seem to influence them, only whilst the Objects of them are present, and immediately strike the Senses: But in Men, who are capable of reflecting or retaining the Images of absent Objects in their Minds, they may be very much heightened or diminished according to their own Pleasure.

Of the Passions or Affections arising from the Body.

THESE are the principal Faculties and Inclinations, Powers and Dispositions, which we observe to be in Men. And, if we consider them singly, what they are in their own Nature, and what the Use and End of them is; we may include not only the intellectual Perfections, but also these bodily Affections and Passions, under the general Expression of *Moses*; and pronounce concerning them, that *behold they are all very good*; or as the Wise-Man says, *Lo, this only have I found, that God made Man upright*. It must therefore be comparatively speaking only, that *These* are at any time affirmed to be *Evil*; and we are to understand by it no more than *less good*, or *less perfect*, when applied to others of a higher Degree or more exalted Nature: In the same manner as the common Ground, compared with the Garden of *Eden*, is in Scripture said to be *curst*, and to bring forth Thorns and Thistles (*Gen. iii. 17.*) And yet there is no reason to think that Thorns and Thistles were to be excepted out of That Part of the Creation, (*Chap. i. v. 11.*) where *God said, let the Earth bring forth Grass, and the Herb yielding Seed, and the Fruit-tree yielding Fruit after his Kind, whose Seed is in itself upon the Earth*. So animal Creatures compared with Man, may in this Sense be styled *bad* or *evil*. And so may Man himself with regard to Angels, and Angels with respect to still superiour Intelligences. There is no End of such Comparisons; and it is

That the Inclinations and Passions in Men, abstractly considered, are not Evil. Eccles. vii. 29.

Clarke. the supreme Being alone, concerning whom absolutely and universally, *Goodness* can be affirmed; according to that of our Saviour, *There is none good but one, that is God.* In all created Beings there are essentially, in every respect, *Imperfections* and *Wants*; their *Goodness* can only, in the Nature of Things, be relative and extend to a certain Degree; and without some Alteration in their Circumstances, or some extraordinary Addition to their Powers and Faculties, they cannot go beyond their natural Limits. Thus material Things are capable of nothing but mere passiveness, of continuing in that State, whether of Rest or Motion, into which they are once put: These are the lowest Part of the visible Creation. Vegetative Things are endued with a Principle superiour to this, whereby they are formed into different Shapes, extended to different Magnitudes, and have different Qualities, and are possessed of what we call *vegetative Life*. Animal Creatures are endued with a Principle still higher, *viz. Instinct*, the Effects of which are very wonderful and surprising; as appears in their great Tenderness and Care for their Young, in their Sagacity to find out and procure Food; and above all, in the curious Contrivance of some of them (as Birds, and Ants, and Spiders, and Bees) in building themselves Habitations, providing Food for Extremity, and the like, beyond the Art and Invention of the wisest of Men. The next and highest Step is the Principle of *Intelligence*, which is peculiar to Man, by which He becomes a reasonable Creature, capable of Religion and Virtue, and a proper Subject of Reward and Happiness consequent hereupon. These are the several Gradations of Beings in this lower World; the Species and Individuals of which, are very different from each other, and are denominated *Good* or *Evil* proportionably to their respective Ends and Uses, Perfections and Excellencies.

All the Evil arises from free Agents abusing these Dispositions and Affections.

As therefore in these Instances of the *Material*, *Vegetative*, and *Animal* Parts of the World, abstractly considered, there is no such Thing as real *Evil*; but every Imperfection or Irregularity is such as necessarily follows from the present State and Circumstances of Things, and is the genuine Result of those Laws which they were originally made subject to: So likewise, if we consider the *intellectual* Powers and Capacities, Inclinations and Dispositions, Passions and Affections of free Agents abstractly; we shall find that *They* are so far from being *Evil* in themselves, that they are on the contrary very *Good*, that is, appointed for very wise and good Ends, which naturally follow from a just Application of them to their proper Objects; and consequently that every *Evil* in them, is either a natural *Imperfection* only, or else arises from the Misapplication or Abuse of them by voluntary Agents under some particular Circumstances; their *Liableness* to which Abuses, and even the actual Commission of them, was not possible to have been prevented, but upon Supposition of destroying or over-ruling their natural Powers and Faculties. Thus the Power of *Understanding*, is a natural Excellency and Perfection, whereby those Creatures who are endued with it, are capable of discerning the Truth of *Things*, and of seeing the Relations that *Persons* stand in to each other; 'tis therefore very agreeable to the Notions we have of God, to think that He should create some Beings with such a Power as this. And, it being in Him intirely voluntary to bestow his Gifts as he pleases; it must be wholly resolved into his Will, *what Degrees* of Understanding He will communicate to any Beings, and in what Circumstances and upon what Conditions. So likewise the Self-motive Power, or that Principle by which free Agents are capable of acting or forbearing to act, is a natural Excellency; because hereby an intelligent Being is capable of conforming his Actions to those Truths and Relations, which by his intellectual Nature only He could see the Agreeableness of; and this renders him a Subject of Morality and Religion. And here also there may, in this Sense, be said to be different Degrees of Liberty; that the Instances and Opportunities of exercising this Power, may be many more and much greater in some Creatures than in others: And *These* also must be referred to the Creator's Will, no One having any Right to any of them. Also the same may be affirmed concerning those Inclinations and Passions, which arise either from the Mind or from the Body; they are of great Use, and designed for very good Purposes. Thus the Mind is naturally disposed to Virtue, the Excellency of which is distinguished by the Understanding:

standing: And Men are excited by their bodily Affections, to do a great many Things, which they would not otherwise have thought of; had they not been signified to them in this Manner; and which are very necessary to their Preservation and Well-being. The Degrees of *these* also are very different, in Creatures of the same, as well as in those of different Species; and depend entirely on the Will of the Supreme Being, who has proportioned them to the respective Circumstances of the several Creatures. In the irrational Part of the Creation, these Passions and Affections are the sole Spring and Measure of all their Actions: They put them upon seeking for Food and Rest, to nourish and refresh their Bodies; and to these is owing the Propagation of their Species, and the Care for their Young, and the like. In Man, the Objects of these Passions are the same; but they are under the Direction of Reason, and therefore ought to be regulated by that. They are to Him in the Nature of Instruments, in the Use or Abuse of which consists the Good or Evil of them. And in Beings still superiour to Man, who have Bodies that do not stand in Need of such Maintenance, Preservation and Continuance, as ours do; there may be no Occasion for such Passions at all: But their Love of Virtue, arising not only from the amiable Nature of it, but from considering and experiencing that the Practice of it is essentially, and in the eternal Reason of Things, the Means of Happiness to an intelligent Being, proportionably to that State and Situation in which Providence has placed them, may be sufficient to induce them to conform to the Rules of it in all their Actions. And this is the Representation given in Scripture, of Angels and just Men made perfect, *And God shall wipe away all Tears from their Eyes, and there shall be no more Death, neither Sorrow, nor Crying; neither shall there be any more Pain, neither Labour.* *And Mark xii. 25. And when they shall rise from the Dead, they neither marry nor are given in Marriage, but are as the Angels which are in Heaven.* It is evident therefore, that in the Nature of Things, and abstractly considered, *These* are all perfectly indifferent, both as to their Existence at all, and as to the Degree and Manner of it. The Variety is infinite, and they are all equally the Object of infinite Power. And 'tis the same here as in the material World; it belongs to Wisdom and Goodness to determine *which*, out of all the Possibilities, shall actually exist, and *which* upon the whole are the most proper and convenient Circumstances to place them in. We can come to the Knowledge of them, only by Experience and Observation. Whence by a particular Examination of the several Sorts of Powers and Faculties, and of the several Objects corresponding to them, we are able to form a Judgment of the general Nature of the Being to which they belong: We can see wherein the true Perfection of such a Being consists, and what Kind of Life it ought to lead in order to attain such Perfection. From the Notion we have of the Perfections and Attributes of God, there is no Reason to think that He should confine himself to the Creation of one Sort of intellectual Beings only, any more than that He should make but one Planet or one fixed Star; it is much more agreeable to infinite Wisdom and Goodness, to make different and various Degrees of Creatures, every one of which in their proper Place contributes to the Beauty and Order of the Whole. And so in Fact it appears to be. In order therefore to judge of the Perfection or Imperfection of any Being, and the Good or Evil it is incident to; it is necessary to consider the constituent Parts of it singly, what its several Powers and Qualities are, and then to put them together, and see their mutual Influence, and what is the Result of the whole Composition. In the present Enquiry, *Mankind only* is our Subject; how it comes to pass that there is so much Sin and Iniquity practised amongst Men. We have already examined the several Parts, of which Man is composed, separately; and have seen the Nature and Use of them: And in *These* there appears no other Evil, than that of *Imperfection* only, which Men have in common with the highest created Beings whatsoever. For there is no Degree of limited Understanding, but there may be a still greater supposed; and no finite Goodness so exact, but that a greater Exactness will yet be possible. Wherefore there can be no Objection made against any one Order of created Intelligences, but the same will hold equally against any other Order that can be conceived. Thus for Instance,

Clarke. stance, if the *Weakness* of Mens Understanding, by which Means they are liable to be mistaken in a Multitude of Things; the Shallowness of their Capacities, whereby they can comprehend but a few Truths; and the Unsteadiness of their Wills, which are often biased by Passion, instead of being governed by Reason; and many other such like natural Defects and Imperfections: If *these*, I say, are any Objection against the present Frame and Constitution of Man, they hold in Proportion against any other, or against all created Beings whatsoever. And according to this Rule, there ought to have been no Diversity of intelligent Beings, but the supreme Being was obliged to exert his infinite Perfections to an infinite Degree: For wherever we stop short of Infinity, the Understanding, how enlarged soever, will be capable of being imposed upon: And if there be any Dispositions or Affections in such a Being, they will be liable to be drawn off by some Temptations; and a small Defect in so exalted a Nature, is proportionably as criminal, as a greater One in a Being of a meaner Sort. But Experience sufficiently testifies the contrary; and shows us that the Wisdom and Goodness of God, is much more displayed in making great Variety of intelligent Beings; from the different Circumstances and Relations of which, arise different Duties, in the Performance whereof they experience particular Satisfaction, have a Power of doing greater Good to their fellow Creatures, and are moreover capable of proportionable Rewards of Happiness. Upon this Foundation, all that is reasonable to expect, is, that in God Almighty's Dealings with such Creatures, He should conform himself to their respective Capacities and Abilities, so as that upon the Whole there should be the most Good, and the greatest Happiness; and that His Government and the Nature of Things should be so perfectly consistent, as that finally, the free Rewards which He confers on his Creatures, should be coincident with *Virtue*, and with That *natural Happiness* which necessarily results from the Practice of it. Thus much we are assured of in general, from what is demonstrable concerning the Perfections and Attributes of God: But all the Particulars, it is impossible for us to know. They are as much beyond our Understandings, as the original Particles of Matter, or the most distant fixed Stars, are beyond the reach of our Eyes. But as all Truth, *moral* as well as *natural*, is analogous; and God has not left himself without Witness in the *moral*, any more than in the *natural* World; we have a very good Foundation, from what we do know and experience, to judge of other Things, the Means of knowing which we are not at present possessed of. It is the present Scene of Life only, that is open to us; we are in great Measure ignorant both of what is past, and of what is to come; it is impossible therefore to see the Connexion and Dependence they have upon each other. There is also just Reason to think, that there are Intelligences superiour to Man, whom he bears some Similitude to, and has some Relation to. Of these we can know little more, than what the Scripture says concerning the Dignity of

Heb. i. 14. Angels and other superiour Powers; and concerning their Office, *That they are ministering Spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be Heirs of Salvation*; but we know enough of our present State and Circumstances, to see manifest Instances of the Wisdom and Goodness of God's Government of Mankind, sufficient to justify him in this respect also, and to render him clear when he is judged; so that He may now appeal to *themselves*, as He did of old by his Prophet to the Inhabitants

Isa. vi. 3. of *Jerusalem* and the Men of *Judah*, to judge betwixt him and his Vineyard, *what he could have done more for it, that he has not done in it; yet when he looked it should bring forth Grapes, it brought forth wild Grapes*, that is, there are *moral* as well as *natural* Means of Improvement, which are proportioned to the Powers and Capacities of the Subject. If these be afforded them, in their due Proportion, there is all done for them that in the Nature of Things could be done; and to suppose more, is to suppose something incompatible with the Subject, and which, if applied, would produce the contrary Effect to what was intended. Thus we see that Powers and Faculties, Dispositions and Affections, whether *natural* or *moral*, cannot properly in themselves be styled *Evil*; either as to the *Nature*, or as to the *Degree* of them. All the *Evil* that there can be in *this respect*, consists either in the *Want* of some Faculties or Perfections which other Beings, superiour to

to Man, are endued with; or else in having the same Powers and Perfections in a lower Degree. Neither of which is any real Evil, but is the unavoidable Consequence of the Nature of such Beings. For it is evident, that bare Existence is better than Non-existence; that animal Life is superiour to dead unactive Matter; that Intelligence and Liberty, and other rational Powers, are yet greater Perfections than Instinct and Passion and the like. 'Tis also evident that every one of *These* is voluntary, and the free Gift of God, which He may confer in what Manner, and to what Degree He himself pleases; no one having any Right to demand them. From whence it follows, that as the supreme Being was not obliged to create any sort of Beings at all, but it is for his good Pleasure only, that they are and were created; so likewise was he under no Obligation to confer such particular Powers and Faculties, or to confer them in such a certain Degree; but *These* also are equally owing to his good Pleasure. And there is no more Reason to complain of that Share which any one Sort of Being possesses, because God has conferred more on others; than there is for the irrational Part of the Creation to complain that they were not made Men, or for Men to complain that they were not made Angels, or for any other Creature whatsoever to complain of the Want of such Perfections and Faculties, as never did belong to their Nature. The Powers therefore and Dispositions, the Passions and Affections, abstractly considered, have no other Evil in them, but what is the necessary Consequence of Mens being finite and limited. 'Tis all, comparatively speaking only; as they may be compared with Beings of a superiour Nature: With regard to whom they may be very imperfect, and yet in their proper Places as good as they were intended to be, and fully answer the Design of their Creation. For it is manifest, that every one of them has its proper Use; and in the right Application or Exercise of it, some very good End is served. 'Tis in the Misapplication or Abuse of *These*, that Evil, strictly and properly speaking, consists. And this supposes that the Being possessed of these Powers and Faculties, is a voluntary Agent; that he not only understands what is fit and right, but has moreover a Power of acting accordingly; that he is not only endued with Passions and Affections, but also has a Power of regulating and governing them according to Reason. In any other Sense of the Word Evil, the Case is the same here, as in all other natural Things; they must all, from their Imperfections, be liable to many Disorders and Irregularities.

IN order therefore to account for the Original of Moral Evil, we must take in the whole Composition of Man. We must examine the several Laws, which the constituent Parts of him are subject to; and see their mutual Influence and Effect. For from these different Principles it is, that the first Motions of all Sin and Iniquity arise; according to that of St. Paul, *But I see another Law in my Members warring against the Law of my Mind, and bringing me into Captivity to the Law of Sin, which is in my Members.* The manner of which is fully explained by St. James, (Ch. i. § 14.) *But every Man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own Lust and enticed; (drawn out of the way, and ensnared by his Desires and Appetites:) Then when Lust (Desire or Passion) hath conceived, it bringeth forth Sin, and Sin when it is finished, bringeth forth Death.* The moral World has its peculiar Laws and Rules to which it ought to be subject, as well as the natural World; only with this Difference, that the one is necessary, the other voluntary; the one is acted upon, the other acts of itself: But the Reason and Foundation of such Actions are certain and uniform.

WHAT these Rules and Laws are, and what is the Obligation in intelligent and voluntary Agents to conform to them, 'tis necessary particularly to enquire into; that we may see wherein Virtue and Vice consists, and whence it is that the Practice of the latter so much abounds in the World. Truth and Right are the proper Objects of the Thoughts and Desires of such a Being, as we have described Man to be. The one is the Result of the Nature and Reason of Things; and the other is the Result of the different Relations and Circumstances of Persons, compared with each other. Wherefore as Man is intelligent, he is concerned to find out Truth, especially such Truths as are of Importance for him to know; and

Clarke. as he is a *voluntary* Agent, it is his Business to regulate his Practice according to *Right*, or as the Condition he is in with respect to others requires. Upon this Foundation the ancient Moralists built all their Precepts of Virtue, and from hence they drew the Obligations to live according to those Rules. * They distinguished Man (according to the forementioned Division of St. Paul) into two principal Parts, *Soul* and *Body*, each of which has its peculiar Properties and Affections; in a right distinguishing of which, and a due imploying them upon their proper Objects, and in a just Subordination of them to each other, they made the whole of Morality to consist. They supposed the utmost Perfection that Man was capable of arriving at, was *to live according to Nature*. By which they meant, that as there are different Kinds of Plants which require different Sorts of Ground, and different Management in order to a due Nourishment, so as to arrive at the greatest Maturity; and as there are different Kinds of Animals, which, according to their different Make and Constitution, live different Sorts of Lives in order to partake of the greatest Good they are capable of: So likewise is there something different from all these in Man, whereby he is distinguished from all other Creatures, which is his peculiar Nature; and in living according to the Dictates of which, he is in the most easy State, and enjoys the utmost Happiness that such a Nature is capable of. The *bodily* Nature, which Man has in common with other Animals, as it is endued with the like Affections and Dispositions with them, so are its Enjoyments the same: 'Tis the *intellectual* Nature that renders him superior to them, in the Exercise and Improvement of which, he advances himself to the highest Perfection. ² The Powers of the *Mind* or intellectual Nature, are distinguished into two Sorts: Such as are originally planted in it, and are involuntary, viz. *Reason*, *Docility*, *Memory* and the like; or such as are acquired and depend upon the Will, viz. *Prudence*, *Temperance*, *Fortitude*, *Justice*, and such like. Both these are styled *Virtues* (Virtue being a general Name for any Excellency or Perfection whatsoever, and is often applied to *inferior* Creatures, and many Times even to *inanimate* Things with Regard to their peculiar Usefulness or Benefit,) but the *latter* are more properly so called, and are derived from that peculiar Excellence ³ of *Fortitude* or *Magnanimity*, which (the Ancients thought) in *Man* exceeded all other Creatures. Every one of *these* has its proper *Object*; in rightly distinguishing of which and duly applying it, consists all *moral Virtue*. Thus the Faculty of *Reason* was as evidently given Men, that they might distinguish betwixt *Truth* and *Falshood*, *Right* and *Wrong*; as the Power of Seeing was given them to distinguish external Objects. There is therefore the same Obligation for a Man to make Use of this rational Power, as there is for him to make Use of his Eyes. And the same may be applied to all the other Faculties of the Mind, as well as to the Senses of the Body.

The Method in which the Heathen Moralists deduced the Obligation to the particular Duties of Morality.

AND hence appears the particular Obligation every Man is *naturally* under, to practice all the Duties of Morality. And after this Manner the forementioned Heathen Moralists deduced them. ^b By the Faculty of Reason every Man is more or less capable of perceiving not only the Things that are present and immediately before him, but also of searching backward into their first Cause and Original, and of looking forward to their Consequences and Effects; by comparing of which together he sees the Foundation he ought to act upon; and by thus comprehending

* Διὸ καὶ τὸ βέλτερον ἀνακρίψας καὶ τὸ σῶμα καὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ἀνθρώπου θεωρεῖται, &c. *Aristo. Polit. Lib. I. cap. 5.*

Atqui perspicuum est, hominem e Corpore Animoque constare; cum primæ sint animi partes, secundæ corporis. *Cic. de finibus, Lib. V. § 12.*

^y Homini id esse in bonis ultimum, secundum naturam vivere; quod ita interpretemur, vivere ex hominis natura undique perfecta, & nihil requirente. *Cic. ibid. § 9.*

² Animi autem, & ejus animi partis quæ princeps est, quæque *Mens* nominatur, plures sunt virtutes, sed duo prima genera: Unum earum, quæ ingenerantur suapte natura, appellanturque non voluntariæ: Alterum earum quæ in voluntate positæ, magis proprio nomine appellari solent, &c. *Cic. ibid. § 13.*

³ Thus the *Greeks* derived *Αρετή* from *Ἄρες*, and the *Latins* *Virtus* from *Vir*. Atqui vide nè, cum omnes rectæ animi Affectiones Virtutes appellantur, non sit hoc proprium nomen omnium; sed ab ea quæ una cæteris excellabat, omnes nominatæ sint. Appellata est enim ex viro virtus; viri autem pro maximè est fortitudo. *Cic. ibid. Lib. II. § 18.*

^b Homo autem quod Rationis est particeps, per quam consequentia cernit, causas rerum videt, earumque progressus & quasi antecessiones non ignorat, similitudine comparat, & rebus præsentibus adjungit atque annectit futuras: Facile totius vitæ cursum videt, &c. *Cic. Offic. Lib. I. § 4.*

in one View the whole Course of his Life, he can make a general Provision for his Subsistence. ^c The same Power of Reason inclines Men to associate with each other, to entertain themselves with mutual Conversation, and to contract Friendship; and herein they are united by the Bonds of Love and Affection, proportionable to their several Relations. ^d It is by this Faculty likewise, that they are able to find out and relish Truth; every Man having a natural Desire of knowing and understanding those Things which he sees and hears, and being unwilling to be deceived or imposed upon. ^e But the Force of Reason is in nothing more conspicuous, than in this particular; that every Man is by this Means made capable of judging of the Tenor and Regularity of his Life and Actions, of discerning what is fit and decent to be done, and what is irregular and unworthy of him. These Principles do themselves intimate what the proper Use of them is, and how they are to be employed: There is a *natural Correspondence* betwixt *them* and their respective *Objects*, which is founded in the Reason of Things, and which is an eternal and invariable Rule of Action.

Thus, that there is an essential Difference in the Nature and Properties of Things, and in the State and Condition of Persons, is evident to every one; whence it follows that in the Application of Things to each other, or in the Actions to be performed towards Persons, there must be an Agreeableness or Disagreeableness, according as they are proportioned or disproportioned to the Constitution and Circumstances of them; and from hence arises what the Ancients called *Decorum*, with Respect to natural Actions, and *Honestum* with Regard to moral Actions. The Mind is not only able to take Notice of Actions, but also to judge whether such Actions be proper or improper, whether they are becoming the Person who performs them, and such as the Relation he stands in to others requires; upon which it either approves or condemns them. For there is a certain Order and Harmony of acting, which recommends itself to the *Understanding*, and is agreeable to it as the Symmetry and Proportion of natural Objects is to the Senses of the *Body*: In performing of which Actions, it acquiesces and is perfectly satisfy'd, is able to justify itself, as to the Matter, Time and Manner, and to render a good Account of them. This Agreeableness of Action to the Judgment of right Reason, cannot be better illustrated than by the Comparison of *Plato*, as represented by *Tully*: ^f *In those Things* (says he) *which are the Objects of Sight, no other Creature is so sensible of the Beauty and Comeliness Agreeableness of the several Parts to each other, as Man; which Proportion, Nature and Reason transfers from the Eye to the Mind; and judgeth that Beauty, Consistency and Order, in our Designs and Actions, are still much more to be observed and maintained. And could we behold these with our bodily Eyes, as we do with the Eyes of the Mind; they would raise in us the greatest possible Love for Virtue.* On this Account it is, that such Actions are every where recommended as *honourable* and *praise-worthy*; insomuch that Praise and Honour have been but other Names for Virtue, because virtuous Actions carry in their Nature the Things most properly designed by those Words. Thus the confederate Part of the Heathen World, found out the Obligation to practise moral Virtue, by a diligent Application and Enquiry into the Nature and Reason of Things, in the same Manner as they found out other Arts and Sciences. As the Proportions of Colours and Sounds are exactly calculated to the Eye and Ear; and there must be some Defect in those Organs, if they cannot distinguish or relish them: So is every Duty of Morality as exactly calculated to the Inclinations and Faculties of the Mind; and there must be some Disorder in these, if they do not take Notice of and be not well affected towards them. ^g For there is something very beautiful and pleasing in every virtuous

^c Eademque Natura vi Rationis hominem conciliat homini, & ad Orationis & ad vitæ Societatem, &c. *Cic. Ibid.*

^d Imprimisque hominis est propria Veri inquisitio. *Ibid.*

^e Nec vero illa parva Vis naturæ est rationisque, quod unum hoc animal scil. homo quid sit ordo, quid sit quod deceat, in factis dictisque modus, &c. *Ibid.*

^f Itaque eorum ipsorum, quæ aspectu sentiuntur, nullum aliud animal pulcritudinem, venustatem, convitiam partium sentit: Quam similitudinem natura ratioque ab oculis animum transferens, multo etiam magis pulcritudinem, constantiam, ordinem in consiliis, factisque censervandum putat. — quæ si oculis cerneretur (viz. forma Honesti,) mirabiles amores (ut ait *Plato*) excitaret sapientiæ. *Cic. Ibid.*

^g Et enim quiddam idque intelligitur in omni virtute quod deceat, &c. *Cic. Ibid. § 27.*

Action,

Clarke. Action, which though it may be distinguished from it in the Mind, yet can never be really separated from it: In the same Manner as in a human Body, the Parts of which are all entire and well proportioned, the Beauty and Comeliness of it cannot be separated from that Health to which they are owing.

The same mentioned in Scripture. Rom. ii. 14. To this it is (I suppose) that St. Paul refers, when he says, *That the Gentiles which have not the Law (revealed) do by Nature the Things contained in the Law: These having not the Law, are a Law unto themselves; who shew the Work of the Law written in their Hearts, their Conscience bearing witness, and their Thoughts amongst each other either accusing or else excusing them.* For here the Apostle supposes, that the moral Law is founded in the Nature and Reason of Things; that every Man is endued with such Powers and Faculties of Mind, as render him capable of seeing and taking Notice of this Law; and also with such a Sense and Judgment of the Reasonableness and Fitness of conforming his Actions to it, that he cannot but in his own Mind acquit himself when he does so, and condemn himself when he does otherwise. And in the 4th Chapter to the *Phillipians*, § 8. the same Apostle recommends the Practice of Virtue upon the forementioned Principles of Comeliness and Reputation; *Finally, Brethren, whatsoever Things are true, whatsoever Things are honest, whatsoever Things are just, whatsoever Things are pure, whatsoever Things are lovely, whatsoever Things are of good Report, if there be any Virtue, if there be any Praise, think on these Things.* These Principles if duly attended to, were sufficient to instruct Men in the whole of their Duty towards themselves, and towards each other: And they would also have taught them their Duty towards God their Creator and Governor, if they had diligently pursued them; for, according as the same Apostle expresses it, *Rom. i. 20. The invisible Things of God, from the Creation of the World, are clearly seen, being understood by the Things that are made, even his eternal Power and Godhead; and, Acts xiv. 17. God left not himself without witness, in that he did Good, and gave us Rain from Heaven, and fruitful Seasons, filling our Hearts with Joy and Gladness.* These are strict Demonstrations, both of the Existence of God, and of his Government of the World; for there can be no Effects without a Cause, no Order or Harmony without Intelligence, and no Benefits or Kindnesses done without a good and beneficent Doer. Wherefore though God Almighty be in his own Nature invisible, yet is he known to us by his Works, and by his Providence; the Consideration of each of which shows us the Relation we stand in to Him, and the Duty consequent thereupon. The same Fitness and Decency that appears in Mens regular Behaviour towards each other, appears also in their Behaviour towards God; and this likewise is founded in the Nature and Reason of Things, and is what the Circumstances and Condition they are in do absolutely require. Thus we see wherein moral Virtue or Good consists, and what the Obligation to it is, from its own native Beauty and Excellency.

For from what has been said it appears there are originally planted in all Men, in a greater or less Degree, certain Faculties and Dispositions of Mind; and that there is an essential Difference in Things and Persons when compared together; which Difference ought to be observed and maintained by intelligent and voluntary Agents endued with those Faculties and Dispositions, as far as is in their Power; by which Means the Beauty and Harmony of the moral World is preserved. And if this be once allowed, it is no more possible for Men to avoid seeing the natural Obligation they are under to practise Virtue upon Account of the native Beauty and Excellency of it, whenever they diligently attend to it, than it is possible for a judicious Ear not to distinguish, in Musick, betwixt Harmony and Discord; or for a skilful Musician not to see, that there is a certain Tenor and Method of Sounds necessary to compose a Tune. Thus far, the mere Dictates of Nature teach us the common Laws established in the moral World, in the same Manner as we are taught any other Science whatsoever. And the same Principles, had they been rightly pursued, would have carried Men still further, viz. to the Acknowledgment of their Dependence upon God, not only for their original Powers and Faculties, but also for the continual Preservation of them. For if they had reasoned here, as they did in other Cases, from the *Effect* to the *Cause*; they must

must have seen, that the Perfections and Excellencies of the Mind of Man, such as Thought, Understanding, Liberty and the like, could not proceed from any Thing inferior to themselves, such as are Matter and Motion, which have not those Properties: But must be derived from a Being, which is itself endued with those Perfections in a much higher Degree, and who is both willing and able to communicate some Share of them to other Beings. And because a Being who is himself endued with Knowledge and Power and Liberty, in the highest Degree possible, could not communicate any Share of these Perfections to finite Creatures but with some Design, which Design is evident from the Nature of those Perfections; nothing can be more manifest, than that *Knowledge* was given Men to this End, that they might search after and find out their Creator; and *Liberty*, that they might voluntarily conform themselves to that Duty which they see arises from the Relation which they stand in to him; and the other Faculties and Powers in like Manner, that they might be applied to their proper Uses, and serve their respective Ends. And the same Argument holds with regard to the *Preservation* and *Continuance* of these mental Powers. The same Experience, which convinces us that we cannot make *one Hair of our Heads white or black, nor add one Cubit to our Stature*, tells us also, that we cannot alter the *Faculties of our Minds*; but that we depend every Moment of our Lives upon the divine Providence for his Care and Inspection over us; and that *these* as plainly show God's Power and Government, as the regular Motions of the Sun, Moon, and Stars do.

Clarke.

Mat. v. 36.
Matt.
vi. 27.

BUT here was the great Defect of the heathen Moralists. They considered only what the Powers and Dispositions of the Mind were *in themselves*, and what the proper Exercise and Office of them were: But they did not extend their Thoughts to the original *Author* and continual *Preserver* of them, to whose Goodness and Bounty they were so much indebted; but they comprehended their Notions hereof, under the general loose Term, *Nature*: By which they meant no more than the present Constitution of Things, the Laws they are subject to, and the Effects produced by them; *whatever* the *Original* of them was; and without any Regard to *him*, under whose Direction they are. And therefore the utmost Extent of *their* Morality reached no further than to what they called the four cardinal Virtues. The Worship of false Gods, of the Sun and Moon and the Host of Heaven, and of dead Kings and Heroes, so filled their Minds with Superstition, that the Worship of the One only true God was entirely banish'd from amongst them; and consequently *moral Virtue*, (which, unless it be built upon this Principle, that God is the Maker and Governor of the World, is nothing but a mere empty Name,) was only a speculative Notion, to entertain the Minds of the Curious, but was of little or no Force, to regulate the Practice of the Generality of Mankind. For though it be true, that the Foundation of moral Virtue is laid in the Nature and Reason of Persons and Things, is the necessary Result of the different Relations and Proportions which they bear to each other, when compared together, and consequently is eternal and immutable; yet the Existence both of the *Persons* and the *Things* themselves is arbitrary, and depends intirely upon the Will of the Creator. The true Principle of religious Virtue therefore, is a conforming to the Circumstances and Relations of Persons and Things upon this View, that *God* is the original Author of them; that, what we call the Laws of Nature, are indeed the Rules prescribed by Providence, under whose immediate Care and Inspection all Things are; that every one of these is appointed for wise and good Ends; and that therefore it is the Duty of intelligent and voluntary Agents, to comply as much as is in their Power, with what they thus find to be the Will of God; and to promote, as far as they are able, what they see to be his Design, in Obedience to his Will, in Expectation of becoming thereby acceptable to him, and capable of Reward from him.

Wherein
the Mora-
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HENCE appears the Necessity and End of a *Revelation*; to signify in a plain and familiar Manner, *That Right and Authority* which God has over Mankind, and the Obligation they are under to pay Obedience to his Laws upon this Account. Though all the Duties of Morality, are founded in the Nature and Reason.

Hence ap-
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Necessity of
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Clarke. son of Things, and are eternal and immutable, (which cannot but recommend them to the Judgment of intelligent Beings, and procure their Approbation;) yet this hinders not, but the same Duties may *also* be consistently recommended upon *other* very different Principles; and may be, for this Reason, more properly stiled *Duties*, because of the personal Obligation to perform them, arising from the *Authority* of a superior Being who has a Right to command them. Thus, for Instance, he who proceeds by the same Rules in Morality that he does in natural Philosophy, *viz.* examines what the *Ends* proposed by the several Powers and Capacities of intelligent Agents must be, and thence collects what sort of a Being it is, from whom these are derived, and what Authority and Power he has over such Creatures; such a Person cannot but see the Relation he stands in to Him, and the Obligation he is under to perform every moral Duty upon this Account; *viz.* That he who has conferred such Benefits on Men, will expect that they should gratefully acknowledge them, and make suitable Returns: And seeing He has been so beneficent, as to bestow these Gifts upon them without any Merit or Desert of *theirs*; if they make a right Use of them, He will reward them according to their respective Improvements. These are the *Principles*, upon which all *Revelation* is founded: And after this manner is the Obligation to the Practice of every Duty of Religion plainly deduced in the Writings of the Old and New Testament, but especially in the latter.

The Man-
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It is every where supposed in these Writings, that Persons capable of becoming Christians, or of worshipping God in the *Way* there recommended, are such as are already convinced that there is a God, a Being infinitely powerful, wise and good; and that this Being is not only the Maker, but also the Governour and Judge, of the World: This I say is taken for granted, as a Thing so plain and obvious to any one that has never so little made use of the natural Powers and Faculties of his Mind, that it could not be made more self-evident; nothing but mere Stupidity or Obstinacy is able to hinder Men from seeing it; like shutting their Eyes against the Sun, and then declaring that it is dark. In this View, the same Things which in their own Nature are fit and decent to be done, become also obligatory to Men upon the account of this Relation which they stand in to God, *viz.* as an Obligation of Gratitude, and in Expectation of Reward. Sobriety, Righteousness and Godliness, correspondent to the Relation we stand in to ourselves, our Neighbours, and God Almighty; comprehend the whole of these Things. And whatever is just and right in itself; that is, whatever is reasonable to be done, under such Circumstances; is the Will and Command of That Being who made and governs every Creature; and it is therefore obligatory to all Men in their respective Stations, upon the *Authority* of God. And this is what is in Scripture meant by *Faith* in general, *viz.* such a firm Persuasion of the Existence of God, and such an entire Dependence upon his Government, as may influence Men's Actions, to do what they find to be agreeable to his Will. This single Consideration fully explains to us the Meaning of all those different Expressions, used by our Saviour and his Apostles, wherein the same Duties of Morality, under different Denominations, and with different Views, are recommended. The Reason why these Duties are seldom in Scripture mentioned by the Name of *Virtues*, seems to be, because the Heathen Moralists meant no more by that Word, than to signify natural Perfections, without having any regard to the Author and Original from whence they proceeded: But the Design of the Scripture being to refer every Thing to God as the first Cause, therefore the Expressions there used are such as were most proper for this Purpose. Thus St. Paul ascribes the very Capacities, Dispositions, and Actions of the Mind, to the good Pleasure of God: Phil. ii. 13. *For it is God that worketh in you to will and to do, of his good Pleasure.* And our Saviour by many Similitudes compares the same Powers and Faculties, to Instruments and Talents put into our Hands by God Almighty, as our King and Judge, who will finally call us to an Account for our Improvement or Abuse of them. And the forementioned great and substantial Duties of Morality, are by St. James called *Gifts*, with respect to God as the Author and Donor, from whom every Benefit and Kindness proceeds: Jam. i. 17. *Every good Gift, and every perfect Gift is from above,*
and

and cometh down from the Father of Lights. By St. Paul the same Duties are ascribed to the *Grace* of God; being the Effects of that singular Favour and Goodwill which He has shewn to Mankind in the extraordinary Help and Assistance of the Gospel; whereby they are instructed in the Knowledge of these Things, and whereby they are in a peculiar manner enabled to practise them: *For the Grace of God that bringeth Salvation, hath appeared to all Men, teaching us that denying Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present World.* In other Places, they are by the same Apostle called the *Fruits of the Spirit*; not only because they are internal and proceed from the Intention and Disposition of the Mind, but because they were delivered and enforced by the *Spirit of God*, inspiring the first Teachers of the Gospel, and working Miracles in Confirmation of the Truth of their Mission: *The Fruit of the Spirit is Love, Joy, Peace, Long Suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, and Temperance.* These Instances show plainly the Nature and Design of the Christian Revelation, and what Principles it is built upon. It was necessary to be thus particular in examining what the proper Objects of the Powers and Faculties of Men's Minds are, and in what manner they are to be exercised and applied; that we might see wherein *Virtue* and *Vice*, *Moral Good* and *Evil* properly consist. And from what has been said it is evident that there are in the *Nature* and *Reason* of Things, *Laws* and *Rules* of Action peculiarly adapted to the Dispositions and Faculties of rational and voluntary Agents: In their conforming to which Laws, there is as much Harmony and Regularity, though of a different Kind, as there is in the Laws of Motion, by which the material World is governed. It is evident also, that the same Laws and Rules are moreover according to the *Will* or *Mind* of God: Who, as He is himself infinitely wise, just, and good; and knows what is fittest and best to be done under every Circumstance; and always conforms his own Actions to the eternal and unalterable Reason of Things; so it is his *Will*, his *Mind* or *Intention*, that every one of his Creatures should walk by the same unerring Rules, proportionably to their respective Capacities and Stations in the World. Which *Will* he has signified to them in their original Frame and Constitution, by those Faculties He has given them, and the Objects He has suited to them; and which He has also signified by the several supernatural *Revelations*, built upon and confirming the Laws of Nature.

I COME in the next Place to consider what are the proper *Motives* and *Inducements*, in the most effectual Manner possible, to promote and procure the Practice of *moral Good* or *Virtue*, and to hinder or prevent the Practice of *moral Evil* or *Vice*; viz. The *Sanction* of the forementioned Laws. By the Faculty of *Understanding*, Men are enabled to see what is their Duty, to discern whether such and such Things be agreeable or disagreeable to the Laws of Truth and Right, and becoming their Circumstances and Condition. By the *Dispositions* or *Affections* of their Mind, they are inclined or have a natural Tendency to do those Things which they see to be true and right, and an Aversion to what they know to be false and unjust; But it is the *self motive Principle* alone, by which they are capable of acting or forbearing to act, according to the forementioned Laws. Each of these, as they are of a different *Nature* and *Kind*, so must they be applied to in a different *Manner*. There are *moral Ends*, as well as *natural Ends*; and there are Means suitable to them both, which ought not to be misapplied or confounded. In *natural Things*, the Causes and Effects are always proportioned to each other, and are inseparable; such Causes always acting by way of natural necessary Efficiency: But in *moral Actions*, the Case is quite different; there is no *Efficiency* at all There, every Action depends entirely upon the mere Principle or Self-motion in the Agent; And in *This*, the very Essence of Morality consists. Take this away, and all *Virtue* and *Vice* is immediately destroyed. For if we suppose any other real Agency, than what is from the acting Being itself, it is so far none of his; He is in that respect acted upon, and only an Instrument in the Hands of another. And as the Action is none of his; so, whatever there be in it, Good or Evil, it is none of his likewise; neither is there any Morality in it, nor can He be accountable for it. But

Clarke. But though there be no such Thing as *natural Efficiency* in the Business of Morality, yet there are proper Motives and Inducements, which may *affect* a Being indued with Liberty; and be the *Occasion*, though not the Cause, of his chusing to act one Way rather than another, without at all diminishing such Liberty. And these depend upon the *Being's* having other Faculties and Dispositions joined with such Liberty. Now this is the Case in Man: He is not only a *voluntary* Agent, but also an *intelligent* and *rational* Agent. And the proper Method to apply to Understanding and Reason, is by Truth and Argument. For as soon as any Truths in Morality are proposed to the Understanding, it cannot help perceiving them; and as soon as the Connection between such Truths is made appear, it cannot help being convinced: *Moral Truth* therefore may be a *Rule* of Action to a free Agent indued with Understanding; and This does not at all diminish his *Liberty*. The Power of acting or forbearing to act, is just the same as it was before: For Understanding and Reason are no *Substances*, and consequently have no natural Power and Efficiency to produce Action. And the same may be said also of the Dispositions and Affections of the Mind. It is not inconsistent with Reason and Liberty, that there should be planted in the same Subject, an *Inclination* towards, and a *Love* for, Truth and Right; and also an *Aversion* and Hatred to Falsehood and Wrong. These may be excited by Persuasion, and by placing the proper Objects before them; and may *induce* a free Agent, but they cannot *force* him to comply with them whether He will or no. Besides these, there are other Sorts of Passions, such as *Hope* and *Fear*; which arise from a Principle of Self-love and Preservation, deeply rooted in every Man; which have also their peculiar Influence upon such a Being as Man is. From some or all of these Principles, arises every Motive and Encouragement to perform any virtuous Action; and upon these Accounts are the Actions *good* or *evil* with respect to the Person who *does* them, worthy of Praise or Blame, of Reward or Punishment. The mere Power of acting or forbearing to act, is a natural Perfection; but there is no *moral Good* or *Evil* in it abstractly considered; any more than there is in any other Thing, indifferent in itself, and capable of being used or abused.

These Motives suppose some Law or Rule, for the Agent to conform himself to.

Hosea xi. 4.

MORALITY therefore supposes that there should be some *Law* or Rule of Action. And this includes a *Knowledge* of such *Law* or Rule, either *natural* or *revealed*; and a Prospect of *Happiness* upon complying with the Terms of the Law, either resulting from the Nature of the Things, or else a voluntary Recompense. This is very well expressed by the Prophet *Hosea*, when He says of the Children of *Israel*, that when they were fallen from the Worship of the true God, *He drew them with the Cords of a Man, with the Bands of Love*; that is, with such Arguments and Motives as were calculated to the State and Circumstances That People were in. And this, the Instances we every where find in Scripture, and the Method there taken to inforce Virtue and discourage Vice, plainly show. The Nature of Man's Duty is laid before him in the most express and easy Terms, and illustrated by the most familiar Similitudes, that every Capacity might be able to comprehend it in one View or another: The most powerful Exhortations and Persuasions are made Use of, to influence the Affections; The brightest Examples are set forth, to excite Men to Imitation; and proportionable Rewards and Punishments are laid before them, to raise their Expectations. Thus it appears from consulting the Frame and Constitution of Man, the Faculties and Dispositions of his Mind, the Passions and Affections of his Body; that every one of them has its proper Object, and that there is a certain Degree or Manner of Application necessary, in the Nature of them, to produce their genuine Effects. And by comparing Men with other Beings, and with each other, and seeing their mutual Relation and Dependence, it appears also what are those several Duties which they owe to each other, and the correspondent Obligations they are under to discharge them.

Whence it is that Man is capable of committing Sin.

By this Means we shall be able to form a Judgment what sort of Creature Man is, what He is capable of, and in what Manner he is to be applied to. And on the other hand, we shall also be enabled to see, how he comes to fall short of that Perfection which he was originally designed for: We shall see *whence* it is that He perverts and abuses the Powers of his Mind, and the Inclinations of his Body; and

and whence it is that He becomes so corrupt and miserable. Because there must be some Imperfection either in the Understanding or the Will, or the Appetites; or else the Being would not be capable of committing Sin, since every Sin consists in a Defect or Abuse of one or more of these; Therefore in God Almighty, who is infinite in all Perfections, who knows what is fittest to be done in every Respect, has a perfect Rectitude of Will, is always disposed to do what is best, can be hindered by no Power, can be drawn aside by no Temptation or Interest, has no bodily Passions or Affections to entice him; for These Reasons, I say, in God Almighty there can be no Possibility of Sin: But in all other Beings, of how exalted a Nature and Station soever, there must be a Possibility of their erring and mistaking in some Particulars; though they may have so clear a Knowledge of their Duty, so strong a Disposition towards it, and so few Temptations to deviate from it, that their Errors and Mistakes may be comparatively very few and small. And such Sort of Beings Angels seem to be: They have (probably) Bodies as well as Men, but they are of a very different Sort; as different, to use St. Paul's Comparison, as celestial Bodies are from terrestrial ones. They are neither produced nor maintained in the same Manner that human Bodies are; and consequently have not the same Appetites. All those Sins therefore that are occasioned by the Imperfections and Wants of human Bodies; Angels and glorified Spirits can have no Means or Opportunity of committing. For where there is neither Hunger, nor Thirst, nor Weariness, there can be neither Gluttony, nor Drunkenness, nor Idleness; Where there is no marrying or giving in Marriage, there can be no Whoremongers, nor Adulterers, nor Fornicators; And where there is no worldly Mammon, there can be no Unrighteousness, Covetousness, or Theft. From the Circumstances of such Beings therefore, so different from those of Mankind, it is very evident that they cannot be guilty of such sort of Crimes. But of those which the *Mind* is incident to, and which may arise from that Relation which these Beings stand in to each other and to God Almighty; such as Pride, Ambition, and false Worship: these and such like, they may be guilty of. And the Instance given in Scripture of the fallen Angels, is a sufficient Confirmation of it. And there may be other Sorts of Crimes, which the particular Frame and Constitution even of celestial Beings may render them incident to. But as Man is of a middle Nature, and partakes of the intellectual Powers and Faculties in common with the Angels, and also of the sensual Appetites and Desires in common with the Brute Creatures; He must under these Circumstances be perpetually liable to be imposed upon and deceived by the Objects of Sense, dictating Things different from the Objects of Reason.

Clarke.

1 Cor. xv.

AND hence the Cause and Origin of every moral Evil, of the *actual* Commission of so much Sin and Wickedness as we see practised in the World every Day, notwithstanding the Creator is infinitely wise and good; is very plain and evident. It is the *Abuse* of that *Liberty* which God Almighty has indued every Man with; which was intended for their Benefit and Perfection, and which they themselves pervert to their own Mischief and Ruin. That such *Liberty* is in itself an excellent Gift, must be acknowledged by every one, who thinks there is any Difference betwixt mere *Appetite* and *Reason*, betwixt an *Animal* and a *Rational* Life, and the Enjoyments and Happiness peculiar to each of them. That there are some Subjects in their own Nature incapable of having this Faculty planted in them, as all mere material Things, however modified or diversified; and that there are other Subjects capable of being indued with such a Faculty, in the Use or Abuse of which they must by unavoidable Consequence very much improve or deprave themselves; is also manifest to any one who considers the Nature and Properties of material and immaterial Substances. But on *which* of those Subjects that are capable of receiving this Power, God Almighty will actually confer it; and on what Conditions, and under what particular Circumstances; this is manifestly arbitrary, and depends entirely upon his *Will*. The Perfection and Order of the Universe requires, that there should be Variety in *These* as well as all other respects: And there could be no *Harmony* or *Beauty* in the *moral* World, any more than there could be in the natural World, without *such Differences*. It is therefore in itself reasonable and fit, that such a *Power* should be given to some Creatures; and that their other

Whence the Cause of the actual Commission of Sin.

Clarke. *Designs and Propensions* should be so strong, as to answer, as far as is possible, the End for which *they* were designed, consistent with this Power. And from hence it must needs be, that whenever such a compound Being, instead of determining itself according to the Dictates of Reason, yields to the Suggestions of Sense and Passion; it must fall into the Commission of Sin, that is, act contrary to the Nature and Reason of Things, and subvert the Order and Harmony established in the Creation.

*The same
Thing con-
firmed by
Scripture.*

AND to *this Original*, the Scripture ascribes the Sins and Vices of Mankind in general. Thus St. Paul in the 7th Chapter to the Romans, which designedly treats of this Subject, is very plain and express in describing the State and Condition of Man in this Respect, and the Manner how he came into it. He supposes, according to St. John's Definition, *that all Sin is the Transgression of a Law*. And his Argument is equally strong, whatever Law we apply it to; whether the Law of Nature, or the Law of Moses, or any other Law. For though they may differ in some particular Circumstances; yet the End and Design, *viz.* procuring Obedience to the Precepts of them; and the Method of doing it, *viz.* by the Sanction of the Law; is one and the same in them all. At the 12th Verse, the Apostle says, *that the Law is holy, and the Commandment holy, just and good*. In this respect then, there is no Ground of Complaint. God Almighty, who made Man, has a Right to prescribe Laws to him; Which Laws are such as Men's present State and Circumstances require, and such as in their own Nature tend most directly and immediately to promote the Happiness and Welfare of Mankind. But if this be so, then follows the Query, *¶ 13. Was then that which is good, made Death unto me?* If the Law be holy, just and good, then, may any one ask, how could it be the Cause of the Sins of Men, and of that Death which is the Consequence of Sin? To which the Apostle answers in the following Words: *God forbid: but Sin that it might appear Sin, working Death in me by that which is good; that Sin by the Commandment might become exceeding sinful*. Which is as much as if he had said: This is a very false Representation of the Matter: For the *Design* of the Law was indeed directly the contrary; *viz.* to prevent Sin, and That Death which attends it: And therefore the very Business of the Law, is to make such a Representation of the Nature and Malignity of Sin, as, if duly attended to, would create in Men a just Odium and Abhorrence of it; and so to set forth the evil Consequences of the Practice of Sin, as might excite in Men a just Dread of the Punishment due to Transgressors. This is manifestly the Design of the Law; And this is all, that it is possible for *That* to do. But if the Event proves contrary, and, instead of producing its genuine Effect in Men, by bringing them to Obedience, they obstinately resist all its Motives, despise its Threats, and do the very Things that are there forbidden; it is very true that they are then in a much worse State than they were before; and the Law, instead of making them happy, has made them miserable. But where is the Fault? not in the Law, for That is confessedly good in every Respect: But that which is in its own Nature good, though it cannot be the Cause, yet it may be the *Occasion* of very great Evil: And this depends wholly upon the Will of the Subject: He brings it voluntarily upon himself: And as *there* the Evil lights, so also must the Condemnation of it. Whatever is *useful*, must in the Nature of Things be liable to be *abused*: And the greater and more universal the Good consequent thereupon is, the greater and more universal will the possible Evil be also. In *material* Things we have given many Instances of this: And the same may be affirmed of *immaterial* Things likewise, *viz.* of the Powers and Faculties of the Mind. This may be applied to the present Case. It is fit that every proper *Means* should be made use of to prevent Sin. Now suppose a particular Sin, such as Adultery, for Instance, be specified by the Law, and the Punishment of Death annexed to the Commission of it: If any Person be supposed to be before ignorant of the Nature of the Crime and of the Punishment, and that he came to the Knowledge of them both, by the Law; it is evident that if, after this, he commits this Crime, the Law is the *Occasion* both of his Sin and of his Death. And if we regard the *Event*, only with respect to this particular Person; it had been better there had been no Law at all. And the same holds true of all other particular

particular Sins. And this is the Solution St. Paul himself gives of this Matter, *Clarke.*
 * 7 and 8. *What shall we say then, is the Law Sin? God forbid: nay I had not known Sin, but by the Law; for I had not known Lust, except the Law had said, Thou shalt not covet; but Sin taking occasion by the Commandment, wrought in me all manner of Concupiscence: for without the Law, Sin is dead.* That is, nothing can be more absurd than for Men to reflect upon the Law, as if That were itself evil, which is only the Measure of Good and Evil to rational Beings; that which teaches them wherein Good and Evil consists. For we could not have known what Right and Wrong is, we could not have told what Bounds to set to our Passions and Appetites, if no Law, neither natural nor revealed, had prescribed them to us. This was absolutely necessary to be done; and yet this is the Occasion of all manner of Iniquity. For it being the Nature of a Law, only to recommend, and not absolutely to force; Men's Reason and Judgment may be thereby convinced of the Excellency and Goodness of such and such particular Things, and yet at the same Time their Passions may so far prevail upon them, that they may act directly contrary to what they know to be just and right. And in this Sense it is, that the Law is said to work in Men all manner of Concupiscence: for without the Law Sin is dead, or, as it is elsewhere explained by the same Apostle, *Where there is no Law there is no Transgression:* that is, Men cannot break through a Boundary where there is none set. Rom. iv. 15.

AND to show that this is a true Solution, we may make the same Appeal that the Apostle does, to every Man's own Experience; and ask him if he does not delight in the Law of God after the inward Man, (Rom. vii. 22.) if his Mind does not freely assent to what is reasonable and just; and not only so, but has a Complacency and Satisfaction in it: But at the same Time, He sees or experiences another Law in his Members, warring against this Law of his Mind, and bringing him into Captivity to the Law of Sin, which is in his Members; that is, drawing him off from those Things which Reason and Conscience dictate, to those which are suggested by Sense and Passion, * 22, 23. And thus it must be, whilst Men are in the Flesh, whilst they carry these frail Bodies about them: *The Motions of Sin which are by the Law, or the Inclinations to satisfy the Lusts and Appetites of the Body, beyond what is fit and reasonable; will work in their Members, to bring forth Fruit unto Death, * 5.* *This Account agreeable to every Man's own Experience*

AND this Consideration affords us a plain Answer to the Objection of the ancient Academicks, viz. *That Man's being made a reasonable Creature, is the Foundation of all his Sin and Misery; and that therefore it had been better for him, never to have been endued with that Faculty at all, than that such evil Consequences should have attended it.* This Argument, if it proves any Thing, proves too much: it takes away the Foundation of all Virtue as well as Vice, of all Reward as well as Punishment: For where there is neither Understanding nor Liberty, there can be neither moral Good nor Evil; and Men are at once deprived of all That Happiness which arises from the Exercise of their intellectual Powers, and which may be freely conferred upon them as a Reward for their past Behaviour. And where these Faculties or Powers are given at all, they must be permitted to exert themselves; otherwise it is the same Thing as if they had not been given at all. Wherefore this is in effect to say, that it is inconsistent with the Notion we have of God, that He should make any intelligent and free Agents at all; that He should give them such Excellencies and Perfections, and command them to make a right Use of them. Which is to take away the Power and Authority of the Deity, to abridge him of the Right He has to create all Sorts of Beings, and to govern them by such Laws as their Nature and Circumstances require. *Hence we are enabled to answer the Objections of the ancient Academicks.*

THE Fallacy of this Argument lyes in these two Particulars; that such Judgment is made partially, and that it is made from the Event only. First, It is very true, that it had been better for all those particular Persons who have abused their Reason and Liberty so far, as to make themselves miserable; it had been better, I say,

^a Satiùs fuerit nullam omnino nobis a Diis Immortalibus datam esse rationem, quam tanta cum pernìcie datam. Cic. de Nat. Deor. lib. 3. § 27.

Clarke. for *Them* considered *partially* and *alone*, that there had been no such Perfections in the World: In like Manner as it had been better for all *those particular* Persons who have fallen by the Edge of the Sword, that there should have been no such Thing as *Iron* created. But this is no Reason why all *other* Persons should be deprived of all the Advantages that They can make of what these Men turn to their own Destruction; and that every Opportunity should be taken from them of making themselves happy, because these Men abuse the same Means to their own Misery. Neither is this any Reason why God Almighty should not, in virtue of his own Authority, commit such Talents to the Charge of his Servants, and command them to exercise and improve them, as they will answer it to Him.

Matt. xx. BUT *Secondly*, with respect to the *Event*; The Question is not properly what *will* be, but what *ought* to be. Put the Case as in our Saviour's Similitude. A Master, who has a Right to his Servants Labour, delivers to every one of them a proportionable Number of Talents to improve, according to their several Capacities and Abilities; and expects that they should employ them in such and such a Manner. Now suppose not only One, but the greatest Number of these Servants, hide their Talents in a Napkin; Would it from thence follow, that the Expectations of the Master were unreasonable? that He ought not to have committed such Talents to their Charge? or that there ought not to have been, or for the future there should be no such Thing as Servants at all? Just such a Consequence is That drawn from the *Event* of *Mens* Actions. God has given every one of them Talents both of Mind and Body; and He requires no more of them than a proportionable Use and Improvement according to their several Capacities, Opportunities, and Circumstances. And whatever Number of them fail in this, it is no Objection against the Thing in general. It was fit and reasonable that such Faculties and Powers should be given them, to carry on that sort of Life which they were intended to lead; and there were no other Hindrances in the Way than what are the necessary Result of their present Circumstances and Condition. Wherefore the Blame will lye wholly upon themselves, and God Almighty will be fully justified.

*Of the Sin
of our first
Parents.*

WHAT has been before said concerning the Nature and Sanction of Laws in general, and the Effects that may be occasioned by them, may be applied to Any Law in particular, and will equally hold good. For the Design of them all is the same, *viz.* to be a Rule or Measure of Action to all Persons to whom they are prescribed. And that this may the more fully appear, and that we may be able to give a distinct Answer to the forementioned Objections in their full Force; we will examine the State of our first Parents, and see how *Sin* entered into the World, and by what Means it has continued ever since. Though there be no *natural* Means of knowing *Who* committed the first Sin, nor in what that Sin particularly consisted; yet in general, it is evident from Analogy, from what we know and experience in ourselves and others, that it must proceed from the same Cause that all other Sins proceed; though the Occasion, Opportunity or Aggravation might be very particular. For as the first Man was made of the same Materials as all Men since are, was endued with the same Powers and Faculties of Mind, had the same Dispositions and Inclinations of Body; it cannot be, but that he must be liable to the same Sort of Temptations, and consequently capable of complying with the Dictates of Sense and Appetite, contrary to the Direction of Reason and the Conviction of his own Mind. And from hence it is that the first Sin proceeded. But the Particulars of it, can be had only from Revelation; for there are no Remains of natural History so ancient as to give us any certain Account of this Matter, except some fabulous Stories amongst the Heathen Mythologists, which seem to be taken from Scripture or Tradition. To the Old Testament alone therefore we must have recourse for Information in this Particular. And here we have a very short Account who the Person was, also what the Sin itself was, and the Manner in which it was committed. As the Design of the sacred Writings was not to satisfy Mens vain Curiosities with philosophical Enquiries, or natural Histories; but only to instruct them in such Things as regard Religion, and the Practice of their Duty; therefore we find them very clear and exact in all those Parts

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in which Religion is concerned ; but in other Circumstances which are foreign to it, and come in only incidentally, they are not so exact, but speak of them in the common Method, and agreeably to the received Notions at the Time of writing them. And hence it is, that in These Matters they are for the most part so concise. Because to Posterity, for whose Benefit and Advantage the Record is made, such Things can be of Use *only in the general*, (for it can never happen that the same Set of Circumstances should come over again, exactly alike in every Respect ; and if any one be different, the Parallel will not hold good ;) therefore the fewer such Circumstances are, the more applicable and useful is the Instance. Thus in the Case before us, concerning the original or first Sin, which was committed by the first Parents of Mankind ; it takes up but a very little Compass, though it be of so great Moment to be known. Nevertheless the Representation is so just, that, whatever Difficulties there may be in some particular Expressions, which were either personal, or related to the peculiar Circumstances of *Adam* and *Eve* ; yet the general Thing intended to be declared to the whole World, *viz.* how Sin entered into it, and what the Effect and Consequence of it was, is most evident and perspicuous.

THOUGH every Part of the Creation is styled *good* ; and therefore there is no doubt but this whole Earth was originally furnished with every Thing necessary for the Support and Convenience of all its Inhabitants, particularly of Man ; yet this does not hinder, but that some Parts of it might naturally be better than others ; and capable of being made much more so, by some extraordinary Care and Improvement. And thus the Place where our first Parents were put, is represented : *And the Lord God planted a Garden Eastward in Eden, and there He put the Man whom He had formed ; and out of the Ground made the Lord God to grow every Tree that is pleasant to the Sight, and good for Food : the Tree of Life also in the midst of the Garden, and the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.* Gen. ii. 8, 9. We cannot conceive such a Creature as Man, to be put into a more happy State than this. The Ground naturally, without any Labour or Trouble, brought forth every Thing that was necessary and convenient, and also every Thing that was pleasant and delightful : So that there was nothing for Man to do, but to dress and to keep the Garden for his Diversion, *¶* 15 ; and to satisfy himself with all the Variety which it afforded.

ALL this Plenty could proceed only from a most loving and beneficent Being. And it was fit that the Person on whom it was bestowed, should be made sensible of this, that he might return suitable Acknowledgement to the great Author of his Happiness. Wherefore God Almighty reserved one Tree in the Garden, as a Testimony of His Sovereignty and Man's Obedience ; *Of every Tree of the Garden thou mayest freely eat, but of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, thou shalt not eat of it ; for in the Day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die : ¶* 16, 17. What there was particular in this Tree, the Scripture says not ; and therefore it is in vain for us to conjecture. And why it is called the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, is not very certain ; there being no other Effects mentioned in the Text to follow the eating of it, but only this, that whereas it was said before, Chap. ii. 25. *that they were both naked, the Man and his Wife, and were not ashamed* ; it is now said, Chap. iii. 7. *that the Eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked ; — wherefore they were afraid and hid themselves.* But whatever the Particulars were, which were of personal Concern to our first Parents only ; the General Thing which is of use to all their Posterity is very plain. They had a positive Precept given them by the express Authority of God himself ; the Nature, Reason, and Circumstances of which, were in themselves very just and fit. For whilst there were but two Persons in the World, the Duties of Morality, which are founded in the several Relations that Men stand in to each other, were very few. If, according to St. Paul's Divisions, we reduce them to these three Heads, Sobriety, Righteousness, and Godliness, corresponding to the Relation we stand in to ourselves, our Neighbour, and God Almighty ; we shall find that our first Parents were capable of transgressing these grand Precepts, in but few Instances. That plain and simple Way of living, which was intended

Clarke. for them, *viz.* in a Garden, and upon the Fruit which That afforded; could not expose them to much Intemperance or Luxury. The natural Desires of Hunger and Thirst are soon satisfied; and it is wholly owing to Art and Abuse, that they are worked up beyond their due Pitch; as is evident in those inferior Creatures, who live in the same Way, and yet never run into any Excess. With respect to our Neighbour, which is the most universal and comprehensive Duty, including every Thing that is due to Superiors, Equals, and Inferiors; the Opportunities of transgressing were still fewer here, because there were no Superiors or Inferiors, and of Equals but two: So that this large Branch of Morality was reduced to the narrow Compass of mutual Friendship. And of the six Precepts of the second Table, there was but one in their Power to break, *viz.* That against Murder. For as to honouring their Parents, committing Adultery, Theft, False-witness, and Covetousness; there were no Objects of these. Lastly, with regard to their Duty towards God, nothing could be more plain and visible than his Loving-kindness towards them, not only in giving them Being, but also in providing them a beautiful Habitation filled with all Manner of Plenty. The least Consideration of this, could not but raise in them the deepest Acknowledgement of Gratitude, and put them upon returning the highest Praise and Thanksgiving to so beneficent and gracious a Sovereign. Neither had they any Thing to tempt them to Idolatry: Other Gods and Lords, besides Him who made them, and with whom they had frequent Conversation, they knew none: Wherefore as none claimed any Authority over them, so they paid no Obedience to them. In these happy Circumstances were our first Parents placed; and suitable to this Condition, was the Duty that God required of them. He was their Lord and Governour, and They his Creatures and Subjects: It was therefore fit that He should prescribe proper Laws to them, and that They should willingly comply with them; otherwise there would have been no Room for God Almighty to act the Part of a Governour or a Judge, or for Them to exercise those Faculties of Mind they were endued with, agreeable to his Will. A less Restriction was impossible, than the Prohibition of one single Tree in the whole Garden: Yet this was all that God reserved to himself, to be a standing Instance, that He would be acknowledged as their Supreme; that this should be a Test of their Obedience, and a publick Memorial of their Dependence upon Him. Wherefore He commanded them, as they had any Regard to his Authority or their own Happiness, that they should forbear eating of it; And as a Sanction hereof, He told them, that the Day that they eat of it, they should surely die. How great the Privilege of Life was, they who enjoyed it with so much Ease and Pleasure, could not but be very sensible, and consequently as desirous to have it continued to them: And whilst they remained innocent, they had no Reason to fear being any Way deprived of it, but on the contrary a very reasonable Assurance of having it prolonged, from the Experience of the Goodness of God in first giving them Life, and a farther Confirmation of it in the *Tree of Life* planted in the midst of the Garden for their Preservation. The *Condition* of Life depended entirely upon forbearing to eat of the Tree of Knowledge. It is manifest therefore, both from the Words of the Threatning, and from what followed afterwards, that the Meaning of the Condition was this: That as they were originally made mortal, and their Life was preserved by the *Tree of Life*; the Punishment of their Transgression should be, to have this Tree, this extraordinary Means of Life, taken from them; and then of Course the common Law of Mortality would take place, and they must in a few Years return to that Dust out of which they were taken.

This Prohibition the Occasion of the Sin of our first Parents.

THIS was the Nature and End of that Command given to our first Parents. And so reasonable was it in itself, so plain to the Understanding, and so easy to be practised, that one would think there should have been no Danger of their transgressing it. Yet such was the original Constitution of Man, and such the Circumstances of Things, that He did not long continue in a State of Innocence. Where there is a Mixture of *Understanding* and *Passion* in the same Subject, the Objects of which are very different; they must sometimes interfere with each other: And consequently such a Being will be *liable* to act according to the Dictates of *Passion*;

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Inclination will sometimes prevail against *Reason*: And where there are any *Other* Clarke. Beings concerned, *Their* Transactions may also be a *Means* or *Occasion* of helping forward any Action. And to these Causes the Scripture ascribes the Commission of the first Sin: *The Woman saw that the Tree was good for Food, and that it was pleasant to the Eyes, and a Tree to be desired to make one wise*, Gen. iii. 6. This was the Effect of *Passion*, and of not attending to her own Reason and Experience: For these would quickly have convinced her, that she placed her Desire upon a wrong Object: *For out of the Ground made the Lord God to grow every Tree that was pleasant to the Sight, and good for Food*, Chap. ii. 9. *of every one of which she might freely eat*, & 16. These were sufficient to satisfy her reasonable Desires: And it must be great voluntary Carelessness, to be deluded by the Beauty of this One, after it was expressly forbidden. With regard to the Precept, as such, it was impossible to be misunderstood: The meanest Capacity could apprehend, what it was to forbear eating of such a particular Tree specified by Name. But any farther than the Fact was concerned, it was possible to misunderstand it. The Denomination of the Tree, *viz. of Knowledge of Good and Evil*, was capable of several Senses; as likewise were the Words of the Threatning annexed, *Thou shalt surely die*: But the right Apprehension of these, was no Part of their Duty. To obey the Command of God, their great Benefactor and Governor, in the Instance given, was all that was required of them; And here there was not the least Pretence either of Ignorance or Inability or any Thing else.

THE remaining Part, is the Transaction betwixt the Serpent and the Woman. It is plain by the Text, that the Serpent gave a false Turn to the Words of the Commandment; and deceived the Woman by putting such a Sense upon them, as before she did not understand them in. The Threatning of Death was intended to strike a Terror in Her, and the Apprehension of it contained something very dreadful. The Serpent, to take off this Dread, told Her, Chap. iii. 4, 5. *that they should not surely die; for God knew, that in the Day that they eat thereof, their Eyes should be opened, and they should be as Gods knowing Good and Evil*. Here, it is evident, were *Two* Things, by which the Woman was imposed upon: The one was, that She was not so to understand the Words of the Threatning, as if, immediately upon eating of this Tree, she should certainly be deprived of Life, and consequently of all future Enjoyment; which Deceit was used in order to abate the just Fears she might have entertained upon that Account. The other was, that as this Tree was called *the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil*, the eating of it would enlarge her Understanding, and make her wiser. And This was suggested, in order to excite the opposite Passion of *Desire*. For the Love of Knowledge was originally planted in the Mind of Man: And *That Knowledge*, which was conceived to belong peculiarly to the *Gods*, whatever it consisted in, must be more apt to work upon this natural Desire. This was the Manner, in which the Woman was prevailed upon to act contrary to the express Command of God. And her Sin consisted plainly in this, that she hearkened to the Insinuation of the Serpent, rather than to the Words of God; and suffered herself to be governed by the Impressions of external Objects, rather than by the Dictates of her Reason and Conscience: Which was both great Weakness and Folly. How this Transaction betwixt the Woman and the Serpent was performed, is not said; and therefore it is in vain to conjecture. The Text mentions no other Particular, than that the *Serpent*, (whatever is thereby meant) *was more subtle than any Beast of the Field which the Lord God had made*, Chap. iii. 1. and therefore, as *St. Paul* expresses it, 2 Cor. xi. 3. *through his Subtlety he beguiled Eve*. Thus we see how Sin first entered into the World: And this Representation of it, is sufficient for Instruction and Example to all Posterity. And had it been thus considered and applied, without mixing any Conjectures of Mens own, or endeavouring to explain particular Circumstances which are impossible to be certainly known; all Foundation would have been taken away, of those many unjust Reflections which have been cast upon this History.

AND as the Sin and the Manner of committing it, is thus plainly described; so also is the Punishment that was inflicted on the Transgressors, and the Effects and Consequences.

Clarke. Consequences thereof. The first of which, was the natural Sense of their own Minds, that they had done a Thing which they were conscious to themselves they ought not to have done: And this raised in them a just Dread of that Being, whose Authority and Beneficence they had despised, in violating his express Command; And therefore we find that they endeavoured to retire from the immediate Presence of God, Chap. iii. 8. *And they heard the Voice of the Lord God walking in the Garden, in the Cool of the Day; and Adam and his Wife hid themselves from the Presence of the Lord God amongst the Trees of the Garden.* This was such a Punishment as was the necessary Consequence of Guilt: But beside this, there was a positive Punishment inflicted upon them, in *common*, and in *particular*. The Punishment *common* to them *Both*, was, that they were driven out of the Garden, and consequently deprived of all the Privileges and Advantages of that happy Place. The principal of these, was the Tree of Life: Which since they were no longer suffered to approach, in order to repair the Decays of Nature; the common Law of Mortality took Place; and they must in the Course of Things, after a few Years, be resolved into their original Principles, and return to that Dust out of which they were taken. The *particular* Punishment to the *Man*, was, that from dressing and keeping a Garden which brought forth naturally great Plenty of every Thing for Food and for Pleasure; he should for the remaining Part of his Days, till the Ground which brought forth Thorns and Thistles, in the Sweat of his Brows, and in Sorrow, should eat of the Herb of the Field all the Days of his Life. To the *Woman*, the particular Punishment was, that her Sorrow in Conception should be greatly multiplied, and she should be made subject to her Husband who should rule over her.

The natural Consequences of inflicting such Punishment.

FROM this Account of the Nature and Punishment of the Sin of our first Parents, it is evident that *Part* of the Evil terminated in *themselves*, and *Part* was derived to their *Posterity*. That which terminated in themselves, was the Sin properly so called, the actual and personal transgressing of the Law, with the Sense of Guilt and Dread of Punishment which necessarily attend it; for these are impossible to be communicated from one to another. Every Action of an intelligent Being, belongs to that Being and to no other; and the Consciousness of its being Good or Evil, depends, entirely upon his own Understanding, and not upon the Judgment of others. Wherefore there can be no such Thing as transferring Guilt, nor, strictly speaking, of punishing one Man for the Sins which were committed by another. But notwithstanding this, so strict is the Relation, and such a mutual Dependence have Men upon each other, with regard to the Circumstances of Life and to the present temporal Good or Evil of it; that some Persons may be very great Sufferers on the account of what others have done: And this is often in Scripture called Punishment in a figurative Way of speaking, because it was occasioned by Sin. And in this Sense, the Sin of our first Parents did not terminate in themselves, but extended to all their Posterity; and the whole Race of Mankind were very great Sufferers by it. They were not only deprived of the Pleasure and Happiness of the Garden of *Eden*, and forced to provide for themselves such Necessaries and Conveniencies, as the common Earth improved by their own Labour and Industry would afford them; but had moreover the Tree of Life taken from them: whence of Necessity they must become subject to all the natural Evils and Calamities of human Life, and to that which is the last and most terrible of them, *viz.* Death itself.

This Account agreeable to the natural Notions we have of God.

THIS is briefly the Account we have of the Sin of *Adam*, and the Consequences thereof. And a due Consideration of it, will afford sufficient Answers to the Objections made against it; either with respect to *God the Lawgiver*, or to our *first Parents* as the *Subjects*, or to their *Posterity* as *Sharers* in the Evil.

First, It is objected; ^b *that as Man is the Workmanship of a Being infinitely good and holy, He should not only have been created without any actual Evil, but also without any Inclination to Evil: For that Inclination is such a Defect, as could*

^b See the Word *Manicheens* in *Bayle*, Remark D. Si l'homme étoit l'ouvrage d'un principe infiniment bon & saint, il auroit été créé, non seulement sans aucun mal actuel, mais aussi sans aucune inclination au mal; puis que cette inclination est un default qui ne peut pas avoir pour cause un tel principe.

not have such a Principle for its Cause. And farther, that as *Free-will* is that Faculty in Men, from whence every moral Evil proceeds; the same infinitely good and holy Being, *who foresaw what an ill Use Man would make of his Free-will; instead of giving Men Free-will, should have determined them to that which is good; or, if He had given them Free-will, he should always have watched over them to keep them from sinning.* The first Part of this Objection is answered by Solomon, *Ecclef. vii. 29. God hath made Man upright, but they have sought out many Inventions.* It is a very unjust Reflection on the Creator of the World, to say that any Thing comes polluted out of his Hands; For as He is in his own Nature infinitely pure and holy, so whatever proceeds from Him, must be most perfect in its Kind. It is so far from being true therefore, that Mankind were created with any *actual* Evil, or any *Inclination* to Evil; that just the contrary is affirmed of them in Scripture, and is evident from Reason, *viz.* that they were made *upright*. If we examine every Power and Faculty of the Mind, every Disposition and Inclination, every Passion and Affection, separately; we shall find that each of them has its peculiar End and Use, has its proper Object; in a regular Application of which, and Gratification by it, it is fully satisfied, and answers some very wise and good Purpose in Life: And that every Evil, with regard to these, arises either from their being placed on wrong Objects, or in an undue Manner, contrary to the original Intention and natural Tendency of them. Wherefore the Fault cannot be charged upon *Them*: They are mere Instruments, of good use when rightly applied, and very mischievous when misapplied; but they cannot operate of themselves: So that their Use or Abuse must be referred to the Agent in whose sole Power they are. It is therefore an unjust Reflection upon the natural Inclinations and Affections planted originally in Man, to say that they are in themselves sinful, or do immediately dispose him to Sin, when there is such large Provision made for the regular Gratification of them all. The true Cause of Complaint, is the Wickedness of Mens own Hearts: *for the first Adam bearing a wicked Heart, transgressed:* Or, as the Wise Man says, it is from *the Inventions of Men*, and not from the Nature of Things. It is by the Help of Art, and designed Contrivance, that every Passion is worked up to such a Height, and produces such disorderly Effects. For we see in inferior Creatures, where *they* are as strong as in Men, there are no such Irregularities, because no such *Inventions*. To the distinguishing Faculties of Man therefore, are to be ascribed all the peculiar Evils that he is incident to. It is his Reason and Understanding which render him liable to be deceived; and it is his Free-will, that Principle of voluntary acting, which makes him capable of *doing* what is unreasonable and unjust. With regard to these Faculties, it is objected, that *upon the Prospect of the ill Use Men would make of Them; a Wise and Good Being would rather have determined them always to that which is good.* That is, (if the Words have any Meaning) it is inconsistent with the Notion we have of the Goodness of God, that He should make any such Creatures at all as Men are, or indeed any finite intelligent and voluntary Agents at all: It will follow, that *Understanding* and *Liberty*, considering what the natural Consequences of them are, are no Excellencies and Privileges at all; but that a mere animal or vegetative Life, or indeed mere inactive Matter, is preferable to them. This, if any Thing, is the Objector's Meaning, or at least unavoidably follows from such Assertions. For upon Supposition that it is agreeable to the Wisdom and Goodness of God to make a Creature endued with finite Understanding and with Liberty, it is agreeable to the same Notions, that God Almighty (in all his Dispensations towards such a Being) should act consistently with those Powers and Faculties that He has given him; Otherwise it is the same Thing as if they were not at all. To say therefore that God ought always to *determine* Men to that which is good, is the same Thing as to say that God should have made Men mere *Machines*, and

* Car si une bonté aussi bornée que celle des Peres, exige nécessairement qu'ils préviennent autant qu'il leur est possible le mauvais usage que leurs enfans pourroient faire des biens qu'ils leur donnent, a plus forte raison une bonté infinie & toute-puissante previendra-t-elle les mauvais effets de ses presens. Au lieu de donner le franc arbitre, elle determinera au bien ses creatures; ou si elle leur donne le franc arbitre, elle veillera toujours efficacement pour empêcher qu'elles ne pechent. *Ibid.*

Clarke. not Men ; and that He should have prevented all Possibility of Virtue or Goodness, as well as have hindered all Sorts of Sin and Vice. For there is no such Thing as *determining* Men to Goodness. Moral Good or Evil depends entirely upon the Supposition that Men are able to *determine* themselves. Take this away, and it overthrows at once all Foundation of Difference betwixt Virtue and Vice, Religion and Irreligion. But *Secondly* ; *If* (says the Objector) *God has given Men Free-will, He should always watch over them to keep them from sinning.* How God watches over Men, to keep them from sinning ; must be judged of by the common Course of his Providence, and the several supernatural Interpositions in their Behalf when the other was not sufficient : And to these we must appeal, whether God has not all along afforded Men sufficient Means of Knowledge in their Duty, and sufficient Motives to induce them to practise it : Whether they have any other Temptations or Inclinations to Sin, than such as necessarily arise from the Constitution and Circumstances of Things. And to suppose any *other Watching* than this ; that is, in moral Cases, to judge of the Means by the Event, and to conceive none sufficient in themselves, but what actually obtain the proper Effect ; is to take away all Opportunity from free Agents, of exercising their Liberty, of being remarkably virtuous or religious, and consequently of the Capacity of being peculiarly rewarded : Which is, for Men to have the most excellent Faculty given them, the most noble Talent committed to their Charge, and no Means afforded them of improving it. Besides, this could not be done but by perpetual Miracles, and, upon every slight Occasion, disturbing the regular Course of Things : Which is very unreasonable to suppose. For if God has made Mens Duty so plain, that if they will apply their Understanding to it, they must apprehend it ; it is altogether as absurd, when they neglect to use their Understanding, to expect that a Miracle should be worked to prevent their falling into Sin, as it would be for a Man who has the Use of his Eyes, to expect to be miraculously hindered from falling down a Precipice, because he shuts them and will not see. Just such a Case is put by Mr. Bayle. ^a *How much greater Reason* (says he) *have we to think, that God who knew all the Thoughts of Eve, could not doubt but that she was just ready to yield. He did therefore suffer her to sin ; and this He did at the same time, when He foresaw that she would certainly sin. The Sin of Adam was yet more certainly foreseen ; for the Example of Eve gave some Light, the better to foresee the Fall of her Husband. If God had purposed to preserve Man in his Innocence, and to prevent all the Miseries which were to be the Consequence of Sin ; would He not at least have fortified the Husband, after the Wife had fallen ? Would He not have given Him another Wife sound and perfect, instead of Her that was seduced ?* What is all this, but to suppose that the Understandings of our first Parents were of no Use ; and that the Example of the one could be of no Service for the other to take warning by ; and that God Almighty was obliged to hinder them from making use of those Faculties, which he had given them. This was manifestly the Case of our first Parents : For we cannot conceive any more advantageous Circumstances that they could have been placed in : Their Duty was so expressly commanded, that it was impossible for them to be ignorant of it, or to misunderstand it : Their Opportunities of committing Sin, were the fewest, that in the Nature of Things could be ; and the Temptations were also the weakest : So that such Sin could proceed only from themselves, from Carelessness, and from voluntary misapplying the Powers and Faculties of their Minds.

The same Account consistent with the divine Prescience.

SECONDLY ; Another Part of the Objection relates to the *Knowledge* of God : And this falsely and wickedly charges him with being the Author of Sin, though not *immediately*, yet *mediately*, by affirming *that it is altogether as repugnant to*

^a See the Word *Paulitiens*, Remark F. A plus forte raison Dieu qui connoissoit toutes les pensées d'Eve, à mesure qu'elles se formoient, (les sociniens ne lui ôtent pas cette connoissance) ne pouvoit pas douter qu'elle n'allât succomber. Il a donc voulu la laisser pecher ; il l'a, dis-je, voulu dans le temps même qu'il prevoit ce peché avec certitude. Le peché d'Adam a été encore plus certainement prévu ; car l'exemple d'Eve donnoit des lumieres pour mieux prévoir la chute de son mari. Si dieu avoit eu à cœur la conservation de l'homme, & celle de l'innocence, & l'expulsion de tous les malheurs qui devoient être le suite infaillible du peché ; n'eût-il pas du moins fortifié le mari, après que la femme fut tombée ? Ne lui eût-il pas donné une autre femme saine & entiere, au lieu de celle qui s'étoit laissée seduire.

the divine Nature to produce Creatures who will infallibly sin, as it is to produce Clarke. Sin; and that, because He certainly foreknew that Men would sin, therefore their Sin was necessary. But the Fallacy of this Argument lyés in these two Things: First, in the Ambiguity of the Word *Knowledge*. Strictly and properly speaking, *Knowledge* has respect to the Things in Being, to the several Properties of them, and the Relation which they bear to each other; And in this Sense God Almighty is said to know every Thing, because, as He is omnipresent, there can be no Distance so great, no Object so minute, no Circumstances so perplexed, but he must fully comprehend every Particular of them. And this is what we mean by *natural Knowledge*, and is the same as seeing the Truth and Reality of Things. With such sort of Knowledge as this, it is evident, the future Actions of voluntary Agents cannot be known at all; for this plain Reason, viz. because they have no Existence, but depend upon the mere Wills of free Beings, and therefore are not the Objects of Science.

BUT there is also a *moral* Sense of the Word *Knowledge*, which regards future Events: The Certainty whereof depends upon a Multitude of Things, the particular Circumstances of which, as to Time, Persons, Place, and the like, conduce towards effecting the Event. This, in Men, extends no farther than *Probability* or *Conjecture*. The Degrees of which, are various; according to their Knowledge of, or Acquaintance with, the State and Condition of Things and Persons: And in some Cases, where they have a thorough understanding of all Particulars, they can pronounce with a Certainty almost equal to Science. Now if this Sort of Knowledge be universally extended, and to an infinite Degree; it will be what we call *Fore-knowledge* in God Almighty. Which though it be different from that other Attribute of natural Knowledge or Science, as having different Objects, and being exercised in a different Manner; yet is it no more possible for him to be deceived in the one than in the other. For as God Almighty prescribes Laws to the whole Creation, animate and inanimate; He can, with regard to the inanimate Part of it, tell, for any determined Time to come, what the State of it will be, and how every individual Particle of Matter will at that Moment be constituted with respect to every other. And with regard to the animate and especially to the rational Part, He can also tell the Degrees of Knowledge that every Being will be possessed of, the Tempers and Inclinations of their Minds, the Dispositions and Affections of their Bodies; and He can farther tell, what Influence moral Motives have upon free Agents, and how far they will determine themselves by them; with many other minute Circumstances and Particulars; all which put together, become infinitely exact, and is the Foundation of *Prescience*, and of foretelling future Events.

THE other Fallacy in the Argument we are now upon, consists in imagining that Fore-knowledge is the Cause of Action, or else that it is a *sufficient Reason* for preventing such Action: Neither of which are true. That Knowledge is not the efficient Cause of Action in any Being, much less the Knowledge of One Being the Cause of any Action of another, is evident from hence, that Knowledge has no Efficiency; it is no Substance, and consequently can have no impulsive Force or Power. Thus if we could suppose a Man to know how every Particle of Matter in the Universe is moved, this would not alter the Motion of any of them. Or if He could know certainly which Way any other Man would determine himself in any Action, this Knowledge alone would neither affect that Person's Liberty, nor alter any other Circumstance. Since therefore Events are not determined by Fore-knowledge, but the Freedom of Action remains just the same with or without it; this entirely vindicates the Divine Goodness from being the Cause of Sin, and shews that it arises wholly from the Agent himself. Nothing therefore can be more absurd than that Assertion of Mr. Bayle, *That by the Rules of Philosophy it may be maintained, that if it be repugnant to the Nature of God to produce Sin, it is repugnant to the same Nature to produce Creatures who will infallibly produce Sin, under those Circumstances in which He chose to place them: For according to*

^a Pendant qu'il voudra Philosopher, on lui soutiendra &c. Entretiens de Maxime & de Themiste, p. 142.

Clarke. *our most distinct Ideas, it is altogether the same Thing to commit Murder one's self, as to put a Man into such Circumstances in which we certainly know he will be killed.* The Fallacy of this Argument (besides that the Instance is nothing to the Purpose, God having an absolute Right over the Lives of all his Creatures, which Men have not over each other; and there may be Cases put, where even with respect to Men it will not hold;) the Fallacy I say lyes here, that He supposes from the Event, that God Almighty designs to seduce Men into Sin, and therefore places them in the most disadvantageous Circumstances possible, in order to tempt them to it: Whereas from the State of Mankind it is evident on the other hand, that God Almighty's Design is, that they should not sin, and therefore He does all that is consistent with his Perfections and their Faculties to prevent it; but they by their own voluntary Abuse frustrate this Intention, as shall be afterwards made more particularly to appear.

AND as to the remaining Part of this Objection, that if Fore-knowledge be not the Cause of Sin, yet it ought to be a Reason for a Good and Powerful Governor to prevent it; This also is built on a wrong Foundation. Every Attribute of the Deity has its proper Object: And our conceiving *that* to be the Object of one Attribute which belongs to another, oftentimes causes great Confusion, and is attended with great Absurdities. And This is the Case here. The right Application of Fore-knowledge does not consist in hindering the Events (which cannot be done but by destroying the Subjects) but in doing all that is fit and proper to be done, consistent with the Faculties of the Agent and with the other Attributes of the Deity, to induce a free Agent in a moral Way, to determine himself to do what is right and just.

LASTLY; All that remains upon this Head, is what our Objector calls the *Infection of Sin*; particularly that of our first Parents: That it produced all imaginable Crimes over the Face of the whole Earth, and, in Consequence of them, all manner of Evils. But we find no such Representation as this in Scripture; It is there said expressly, *that the Son shall not be punished for the Iniquity of the Father*: And therefore whatever Evils befall the Children, which the Parents might be the Occasion of, they are but improperly called Punishments, and are such only as might have justly come upon them in the common Course of Things, though their Parents had not sinned: So that, as our Saviour says, *we ought not to esteem them Sinners upon that account.* The *Infection of Sin*, is chiefly the Example, Authority, or Persuasion of Others: The *immediate Cause* must be from Mens selves. So that though some may be great Sufferers by Occasion of Others; yet so long as they are not conscious of any personal Guilt, they cannot think those Evils to be truly Punishments, or the Effects of the Displeasure of a just and righteous Governor: According to that of St. Paul, *The Sting of Death is Sin.* The looking upon Death as a Punishment inflicted upon us for our actual Sin, is that which makes it terrible. It would have another Appearance to an innocent Person, who would look upon it only as one of the natural Effects of the present State of Things. And thus the Effects of the first Sin are explained by St. Paul: *In Adam, or by Adam, all died*; all the Sons of Adam are mortal Men. Which Evil, his Transgression was the Occasion of. But as They have no Right to live for ever, God Almighty might, if He had pleased, have put them originally in the same State, and never given them the Tree of Life at all; and there would have been no Injustice done to them. But this Subjection to Death, when considered as a Punishment, is a Punishment for their own Sins, and not for the Sins of their first Parents: *Wherefore as by one Man Sin entered into the World, and Death by Sin, and so Death passed upon all Men, for that all have sinned*; The same Punishment may be inflicted for different Sorts of Sins. And thus Death is made the general Punishment for Mens Transgressions here, whatever the particular Nature of them be: And therefore *Death reigned from Adam to Moses over them that had not sinned after the Similitude of Adam's Transgression.* Adam's Sin consisted in transgressing a positive Law of God: But there was no positive Law esta-

blished from the Days of *Adam* to the Days of *Moses*: Wherefore Men could only, during that Time, transgress the Laws of Nature and Reason, that is, act contrary to the Sense of their own Minds; and for this they were continued subject unto Death. This is the Effect that the Scripture mentions of the Sin of our first Parents. And whatever other Consequences may be drawn from thence, do not affect us as Christians; nor relate to our eternal Salvation. *Faith and Repentance* are the only Condition of the Gospel: whence it is evident, that the Sins to which Pardon is on these Conditions annexed, are personal: For as no Man can sin, so no Man can repent for Another.

BUT for a farther Explication of this, let us consider the present State of Mankind according to the Gospel Account of it, in order to see what Provision is there made to prevent Sin; whence it is that the Gospel produces not the designed Effect; and what is reasonable to be expected afterwards. The Foundation of the Gospel is laid in this, that all Men are Sinners; it supposes that every Person has in some Instances failed of performing his Duty; according to that of our Saviour, *They that are whole need not a Physician, but they that are sick; I came not to call the Righteous, but Sinners to Repentance*: and St. Paul agreeably hereto, *For all have sinned, and come short of the Glory of God*. For the Truth of this, the Apostles appealed to every Man's own Reason and Judgment, whether he was not conscious of having offended in many Things; the Guilt of which raised in him a just Dread of Punishment from that Supreme Being, whose Laws he had transgressed. And that this was the Case of all Mankind, in every past Age, appeared not only from the Confession of the wisest and best amongst them, but from the general Practice of the whole World, in their Sacrifices and other religious Rites; whereby they signified the Sense they had of their own Guilt, and endeavoured to make Atonement for what they had done amiss. This being confessedly the State of Mankind; both of Those who had no other Light or Assistances besides what their own Reason and Conscience suggested to them, (for these *knew the Judgment of God, that they which commit such Things were worthy of Death*;) and also of Those who had supernatural Revelations made to them; the Design of which Revelation was to reinforce their Duty, and to shew them the Condemnation they were under: This I say, being confessedly their State, the great Query was, as St. Paul says, *Who should deliver them from the Body of this Death?* That is, How should they escape that Death which they had so often deserved, for their repeated Transgressions? Now in order to a full Answer to this, it was necessary not only to describe the State Mankind were in, but also to shew by what Means they came to be so wicked and miserable; which our Saviour himself does in general, from the Prophet *Isaiah*: *By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: for this People's Heart is waxed gross, and their Ears are dull of Hearing, and their Eyes they have closed, lest at any time they should see with their Eyes, and hear with their Ears, and understand with their Heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them*. Where it is evident, that God has given Men Powers and Faculties of Body and Mind, in order to find out and practise their Duty; and that if they did but rightly make use of these Faculties, they could not possibly fail in either respect. Wherefore their Corruption and Degeneracy was owing to themselves; They voluntarily neglected and despised the Means of Knowledge, and obstinately abused and perverted their natural Abilities: the necessary Consequence of which, is Ignorance and Vice. But St. Paul is more particular in explaining the Method of Providence, and vindicating the Goodness and Wisdom of God's Dealings with Men, in his Epistle to the *Romans*; where He distinguishes Mankind into two Sorts; those that were subject to the Law of Nature only, and those that had moreover a supernatural Revelation made to them: And he shews whence it is, that each of these failed of obtaining that Effect which it was reasonable to expect from them.

WITH respect to those who had only the Law of Nature to direct themselves by, He says, that *That which may be known of God, is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them: For the invisible Things of Him from the Creation of the*

Clarke.

The State of Mankind as represented in the Gospel.

Matt. ix. 12, 13.

Rom. iii. 23.

Rom. i. 32.

Rom. vii. 24.

Matt. xiii. 14, 15.

The Light of Nature sufficient to teach Men the their Duty.

Clarke. *the World are clearly seen, being understood by the Things that are made, even his eternal Power and Godhead; so that they are without Excuse: because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their Imaginations, and their foolish Heart was darkened.* There cannot be a plainer nor more exact Account given of this Matter, than the Apostle here gives us. God is in his own Nature invifible, *No Man hath feen or can fee Him*; He is alfo infinite and immense, and therefore cannot fully be comprehended by finite Beings: But fomewhat we can underftand of him; And in order to true Religion, or a right Worfhip of him, it is abfolutely neceffary that Men fhould have fome Knowledge of him; otherwife, as our Saviour fays, *they would worfhip they know not what.* Now That which Men are able to apprehend concerning him (which is fufficient for all the Purpofes of Religion) he has manifested in the moft plain and vifible Manner poffible to every Capacity; viz. in the Works of the Creation. Thefe are a plain Demonftration of the Power and Goodnefs of God, and of the Duty which Men owe to him upon that Account. For He who takes never fo flight a View of the Order and Beauty of Nature, or who confiders never fo little what has ~~paſſed~~ with reſpect to Himſelf; who confiders, not only the Benefit of his *Being*, but the perpetual *Preſervation*, and the innumerable *Conveniencies* of Life; cannot help feeing that *theſe* are the Effect of infinite Power and Wiſdom and Goodnefs, and confequently that there muſt be a Being in whom theſe Perfections reſide; and that This Being ought, not only to be acknowledged, but alfo to be obeyed with the utmoſt Thankfulnefs and Gratitude. Theſe Things, I ſay, are fo obvious, that they cannot poſſibly eſcape the Notice of the meaneſt Underſtanding, with the leaſt Attention; any more than it is poſſible for a Man, when he ſees the moſt beautiful Building, to imagine that it was made without any Hands, and contrived without any Art; or when he hears the moſt harmonious Sound, to conclude that it is effected without any Cauſe, or without any Skill. Mankind are therefore without Excuse; they cannot plead Ignorance of their Duty; it is as evident to their Underſtandings, as Light is to their Eyes. The Cauſe of all their Iniquity therefore was from themſelves, either by a *voluntary* not attending to the Means of Knowledge, which by Degrees became habitual Negligence; or elſe *obſtinately* abuſing thoſe Means, at the ſame Time that they were conſcious of the Truth. The neceſſary Conſequence of which was, that Paſſion taking the Place of Reaſon, and Men being wholly guided by it, they muſt run into the higheſt Extravagance here mentioned by the Apoſtle; viz. worſhipping the loweſt Part of the Creation, inſtead of Him that made the Whole. And the Caſe of ſuch Perſons is the ſame with Regard to Morality and the Faculties of their Minds, as it would be with Reſpect to natural Things and the Powers of the Body, if Men ſhould neglect to uſe their Eyes or other Senſes, (which would be attended with the utmoſt Confuſion) and then plead for themſelves, that they were not ſufficient for the Purpofes of Life.

The ſame further promoted by Revelation

This is the Scripture-Representation of the State Mankind in general reduced themſelves to, when they were ſubject to the Law of Reaſon only. And not much different, was the Caſe of thoſe who had moreover a ſupernatural Law given them. This Law, as the ſame Apoſtle ſays, *was holy, juſt and good*; and ſo like- wiſe was the End of appointing it, viz. that Men might reap the Benefit of it, by conforming their Actions to it. But all that any Law can do, being no more than to lay before Men the Particulars of their Duty, and to inforce them with Promiſes and Threats; theſe having no natural Efficiency in them to compel Men to act, They may through Negligence forbear conſidering the Nature of its Pre- cepts, or through Obſtinacy reſiſt its Motives: And ſo, of Conſequence, That which was originally deſigned, and in its own Nature tended to promote true Religion and Virtue; may be unto them, by their own Fault, an Occaſion of Fall- ing. Thus the *ſupernatural* Means of Religious Knowledge were abuſed by the *Jews*, as the *natural* Means were by the *Gentiles*; And ſo the whole World, as St. John expreſſes it, *lyeth in Evil*, were guilty of Sin, and liable to the Conſe- quences of it. This was the Condition of Mankind at the Time when the Goſpel was eſtabliſhed. God Almighty had done all for them that infinite Wiſdom and Goodneſs

Rom. vii.
12.

Goodness could do, consistently with their Circumstances, to prevent them from *Clarke.* sinning; but they had frustrated his Intentions: After which, nothing remained but the executing of Justice, or the shewing of Mercy. They had forfeited all Title to Life and Happiness by voluntary transgressing the Law, and were moreover subject to the Condemnation of it; Wherefore they were for the future wholly at the good Pleasure of God to do with them as He saw fit, either to inflict the Punishment threatened, or to propose to them Terms of Pardon and Acceptance. His infinite Pity and Compassion prompted him to the latter; as even our *natural* Knowledge of the Attributes of God, teaches us to hope. And accordingly, after due Preparation; when the Circumstances and Condition of Mankind were most fitted for it, the Prophecies of the *Jews* being compleated, and the Expectation of the Gentiles greatly raised; he sent a *Person* into the World to declare, that he *would* accept of the Repentance of Sinners, and would reward their future Obedience. This *Person* was the same that was foretold by the Law and the Prophets to the *Jews*, under the Titles of the *Messiah*, or *Christ*, the *Son of God*, the *King of Israel*, and the like: And the Testimony He gave of himself was, the working of greater Miracles than *Moses* or any other Prophet. To the Gentiles, who were Strangers to these Characters, He appeared by the same Testimony, to be a Man approved of God, and ordained to declare his Will to them; according to these Words: *I have set thee to be a Light to the Gentiles*, *Acts xiii.* *and that thou shouldest be for Salvation to the Ends of the Earth.* The Design *47.* of his Mission is fully and clearly expressed by *St. Paul*, in his Discourse to the *Athenians*: *God that made the World and all Things therein, seeing that He is* *Acts xvii.* *Lord of Heaven and Earth, winked at the Times of past Ignorance, but now com-* *30, 31.* *mandeth all Men every where to repent, because He hath appointed a Day in which he will judge the World in Righteousness, by that Man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given Assurance unto all Men, in that he hath raised him from the Dead.* This short Account gives us a true Notion of the Christian Religion; and shews us the Agreeableness of it to the natural Apprehension Men have of God, before they have corrupted themselves. How far the *Athenians* were sunk into Superstition and Idolatry (who were yet the most learned and polite Part of *Greece*) the Instance here given evidently shews. It was necessary therefore, in order to their Reformation, to give them a right Notion of God; that He is That living, intelligent and beneficent Being, who made the Heavens and the Earth, and the Sea, and all Things rational, animate and inanimate, that are therein; that He not only originally formed them, but also is Lord over them, Governor of them, and regulates them by the several Laws which their respective Natures and Circumstances render them subject to. Wherefore as Men are made reasonable Creatures, capable of giving an Account of their Actions, and consequently of being rewarded or punished for what they do; God Almighty now declares to the whole World, that he will overlook and pass by those Things that proceeded from Mens former Ignorance; but for the future, he commands them All every where to repent, because, as He is Governor of the World, he will certainly judge it: In order to which Judgment, He has appointed a *Person*, even *Jesus Christ*, to whom He has committed all Power of judging; and He has set apart a particular *Time* when it shall be executed, and every Man shall receive his Sentence according to the unerring and eternal Rule of Righteousness. And, as the fullest and most compleat Assurance hereof, He has raised this very Person from the Dead, after he had been maliciously slain by the *Jews*. These are the fundamental Principles of the Gospel; and under these Views and with these Expectations is every Christian to direct his Life and Conversation. If he thoroughly examines the Nature and Consequences of them, he will immediately see the Folly and Absurdity of all Idolatry and false Worship, under every Dispensation of Religion, and will be led to the true Worship of the true God in that Method which He himself has appointed. Every one of these Particulars are enlarged, explained, and illustrated throughout the whole *New Testament*, by Variety of different Expressions, Similitudes, and the like, according to the different Capacities and Customs of those Persons to whom they were delivered; That they who do not apprehend them in

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Clarke. one View, may more clearly see them in another: for they all manifestly tend to the same Thing.

Of the
Power of
the Devil.

HAVING thus briefly seen the Nature and End of the Gospel Institution, and how admirably well it is suited to obtain the Effect proposed by it; I come now to examine particularly the Objections that have been made against it. And the first is, the Representation which is there made of the Power and Dominion of the Devil; which is so great and universal over all Mankind, as may seem to favour the *Manichæan* Notion of an infinitely evil Principle. I have before demonstrated that it is absolutely impossible that an infinitely evil Principle should exist at all; and therefore if the Devil were represented in Scripture as a very exalted Being, yet since He cannot but be dependent, and owe both his Existence and Continuance to the Will of the Supreme, it is evident that He can do nothing but by Permission; and such Permission must be for some general wise and good End; and, were He never so potent, yet, because He is limited, there is no Proportion between His Power and the Power of God, who can destroy him and blast his Designs in a Moment. And therefore the Thing must be understood in *This* Latitude at least. But the Scripture does not represent him even *thus* great, but only as the Head and Leader of the rebellious Angels, who were cast out of the Presence of God, because, as St. *Jude* says, *They kept not themselves within their proper Bounds, but left their own Habitation, and are reserved in everlasting Chains under Darkness, unto the Judgment of the great Day.* Now the Angels, as the Royal Psalmist says, are but a little superior to Men: And therefore to make any Comparison between any, even of the highest Order of them, and God Almighty who is supreme over all, is to set a Creature upon the Level with the Creator, and to equal Finite with Infinite. It is very true indeed, that the Devil is called *the God of this World, the Prince of the Power of the Air*; and the whole World is said to be *his*, and every thing in it *at his Disposal*. Whence Mankind are represented as his Subjects and Children, in whose Minds he works to produce Disobedience, and before whose Eyes he lays perpetual Snares and Temptations to seduce them, and over whose Bodies he has such Influence as to inflict the several Diseases and Calamities they are incident to. Learned Men have very much perplexed themselves how to account for this extensive Dominion of *Satan*, and have invented various Hypotheses in order to solve the Difficulties objected. But it is the same with these Hypotheses, as with those by which the ancient Philosophers attempted to explain the Phænomena of the natural World. They are wholly beside the Purpose: And whichever of them be true, or whether any of them be so, is all one as to the Scripture Account and Design. For it is manifest, all that is intended in Scripture, is only to represent That State of Sin and Guilt Mankind are in; and to let them know what is required of them for the future, in order to their Recovery out of it. Wherefore it is the plain and visible Effects only, and the Degree and Universality of them, that are there laid down; and not the natural Causes of them, or the philosophical Reasons enquired into. Wherefore the same Effect is ascribed to different Causes, according to the various Opinions of Men at that Time; and illustrated and explained by different Similitudes, that Persons of all Capacities might in one View or other apprehend and apply it. And that this is so, appears from hence; that when either our Saviour or his Apostles speak in plain Words, without any Figure or Metaphor, they then describe such Effects only in the most intelligible Manner. These Places therefore we ought to lay the whole Stress upon, which are so obvious that no Man ever did or can misunderstand them: And we ought to explain the difficult ones by these, and not these by the difficult ones. Thus, in the Instance before us, when our Saviour told the *Jews* (who boasted that they were the Children of God and of the Patriarchs,) that on the contrary they were indeed the Children of the Devil; he immediately explains himself: *Ye are of your Father the Devil, and the Lusts of your Father ye will do. He was a Murderer from the Beginning, and abode not in the Truth, because there is no Truth in him. When he speaketh a Lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a Lyar, and the Father of it.* Here the *Jews* are reproached as having the Devil for their Father, because they imitated him,

John viii.
44.

as Children for the most part do their Parents, in those Particulars which he was *Clarke.* most remarkably guilty of, *viz.* Murder and Lying. And thus likewise St. John *is full and express, and introduces his Words with a Caution to us not to be imposed upon in a Matter of so great Concern by any other Representation: Little* *John iii.* *Children, let no Man deceive you: He that doth Righteousness, is righteous, even* *7, 8.* *as he is righteous: He that committeth Sin, is of the Devil; for the Devil sinneth from the Beginning. — In this the Children of God are manifest, and the Children of the Devil: Whosoever doth not Righteousness, is not of God, neither he that loveth not his Brother.* Nothing can be more evident, than that the Apostle here makes the Principle of every *virtuous* and of every sinful Action, to be from within every Man's self. It is the *Acting* only, that is worthy of Praise or Blame, and which denominates a Man *just* or *unjust*. If any Man *commits* a Sin, whatever the Cause, Occasion or Motive may be, He is of the Devil. This is fundamental to the Christian Religion; and it is by this Rule only, that Christians are to distinguish the Children of God from the Children of the Devil; and in this they cannot possibly be mistaken. And that we ought to interpret Scripture in this Manner, our Saviour himself gives us an Example: *viz.* The Jews brought *Matt. ix.* to him a Man sick of the Palsy, that he might heal him; as soon as he came *5.* near, Christ said unto him, *Son, be of good cheer, thy Sins be forgiven thee.* This Expression the Jews were surprised at, because they thought it Blasphemy. On the other hand, they imagined that every Distemper was inflicted as a Punishment for some Sin: Which our Saviour very well knowing, said to them, *Which is easier to say, thy Sins be forgiven thee, or to say, rise and walk?* That is, the same Thing being meant by two different Expressions, it was all one whether the literal or metaphorical Phrase was made use of. And in many other Places, He always avoids the Enquiry into the natural or metaphysical Causes of Things, (as in the Case of the Man that was born blind, and of the eighteen Persons upon whom the Tower in *Siloam* fell;) and bids Men apply the external Facts only to themselves, and make a right Use of them for their Improvement. And the same may be said concerning that Power which we find so often ascribed to the Devil, over the Bodies of Men, to inflict several Diseases; particularly what is called *Possession*. The Testimony our Saviour gave of his Power and Authority, was the working of Miracles; such Miracles as the meanest Understanding must know were contrary to the common Course of Things, and superior to any Power on Earth; and consequently, as *Nicodemus* rightly argued, *no Man could do such* *John iii. 2.* *Things, except God were with him.* The Principal of these, was the curing all Sorts of Diseases, of how long Continuance, or of how great Malignity soever. Now this Power was equally evidenced, whatever the Physical Cause of these Distempers were. So that it is not material, as to the religious Uses to be made of them, what Cause they are ascribed to: It may be an Error in Natural Philosophy, but the Truth of Religion is not at all affected by it. And hence it is that the Writers of the New Testament, though they perfectly agree in every Thing that is essential to Religion, yet they are not so very nice and exact in the remote Circumstances of their Relations. And therefore a Fact is sometimes represented in different Expressions, according to the Notions of the Persons to whom it was delivered, or the different Views of them that related it. Thus, the Man who applies to our Saviour to heal his Son, in his Description of the Disease, uses several Expressions, signifying the same Thing; as, that he was *lunatick*, that he was *fore vexed*, or, as it is in the Original, *κακῶς πάσχει*, *he suffered grievously.* And in the curing of him, it is said, that *Jesus rebuked the Devil, and he departed out of him.* From which Account it is evident, that some of these Expressions must be metaphorical, because the same Effect is ascribed to different Causes. So that it is most probable that these Denominations were given, from different Considerations of the same Disease; as That of *Lunacy*, from the periodical Revolution of it; That of *evil Suffering*, from the Effect; and That of *Possession*, from the reputed Cause. And if every one of these be included, the true Inference to be drawn is this, that *Christ* who by the Word of his Mouth, healed the Person thus affected, was superior to all these Causes separately or jointly; And

Clarke. therefore He was to be acknowledged as having all Power over the Devil, and over the Laws of Nature, so as in every Thing to make them yield to him: According to that Similitude of our Saviour's, *How can one enter into a strong Man's House, and spoil his Goods; except he first bind the strong Man? and then he may spoil his House.* His casting out Devils therefore, was a Demonstration, that however extensive the Dominion of *Satan* was, it could not stand before Him, who came to establish a Kingdom directly opposite to it. Accordingly he says in another Place, when his Disciples told him, that even the Devils were subject unto them through his Name: *I beheld Satan as Lightning fall from Heaven.* It is therefore great Weakness in Mr. Bayle, to conclude from those Expressions in Scripture, which were intended only to shew the universal Prevalence of Sin, and the Strength of the Gospel Motives in overcoming it; it is great Weakness, I say, to conclude from hence, that the natural Power of the Devil is very near equal to that of the Son of God; when it is expressly said, that there is no Comparison; but upon *Christ's* exerting his Power, the Devil fled as quick before him, as the Lightning moves from one Part of the Heavens to another.

Of Temptations to Sin. AND altogether as weak, is that other Objection concerning the Universality and Force of those Temptations, by which Men are seduced into Sin; as if God Almighty laid them in their Way, as so many Snares, on purpose to entangle them, and then afterwards punish them for what they were thus deceived into. As this Representation is directly contrary to the natural Notions we have of God, from what we observe here of the general Course of his Providence, so is it also contrary to the plain and express Words of Scripture; in which we have as clear an Account of the Nature of such Temptations, and the particular Manner how they operate on Men, agreeably to every one's own Experience; as is possible to be given. From those Places of Scripture therefore, which are free of all Metaphors, and where the Terms are common and obvious to every Capacity; we ought to form our Notions, concerning the Truth and Reality of such Temptations: And from These ought we to explain the other and more difficult Places, which are either figurative, or regard some particular Customs or generally received Notions, which to us at this Distance of Time may seem very surprising. And thus St. James directly answers this Objection: *Let no Man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with Evil, neither tempteth he any Man. But every Man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own Lust, and enticed: Then when Lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth Sin; and Sin when it is finished, bringeth forth Death.* Here the Apostle first vindicates God Almighty from having any Hand in seducing Men into Sin, and then shews whence it is that they are drawn into the Commission of it. God is of a Nature infinitely pure and holy, so that no Evils of any Kind can at all influence or affect him; he cannot be in the least stained or polluted by them: It is therefore absolutely impossible that he should either will or intend, much less actually do any thing in order to bring Men into Sin; for this would argue some Degree of Evil in him: But every Temptation is from a Man's own self. When either through Negligence, or with Design, he permits those Desires and Passions, which, when exercised upon their proper Objects and in a due Manner, are of excellent Use and Advantage to him, to exceed their just Bounds and to drown his Reason and Judgment; then is he drawn into a Snare by them; and in submitting to their Suggestions, Sin is produced, which is attended with Death as the just Consequence of its Demerit. So that every Sin is a Man's own Act; and arises from, and is finished within himself. Agreeably to which, is that of St. Paul: *There hath no Temptation taken you, but such as is common to Man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the Temptation also make a Way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.* Here this Apostle affirms of Temptations, that they arise from the present Circumstances and Condition of Human Nature, and are no more than naturally result from the Dispositions of Mens Minds, the Texture of their Bodies, and the Constitution of Things without: All which are so immediately under the Direction of Almighty God, that He does most exactly adjust and proportion every one of them. So that it is through

through every Man's own Fault, if He is at any Time imposed upon by them. *Clarke.* This is a very familiar and natural Account of the Temptations incident to Mankind, and of the Manner how Men are affected by them; and it is exactly agreeable to what we every Day observe of them. In other respects, and according to vulgar Acceptation, the same Things may also be expressed differently: Which yet ought not by any Means to be supposed inconsistent with what is thus plainly and explicitly declared. Thus with regard to the *Event*, or from the bare Consideration of the *Effect* of the Temptations, and the universal Prevalency of them; which is to be judged of by Mens Actions or Compliance with them, they are called *Snares* and *Baits*; and are said to *allure*, *deceive*, and *draw* Men into Sin. Which Words are not to be understood literally, but metaphorically, as signifying the *Effect* only, and not the immediate Cause or Intention; and therefore must be interpreted in a moral or spiritual Sense. And it is altogether as absurd to suppose such Temptations to be in themselves *evil*, or to have any natural Efficiency upon Men to cause them to sin, as it was in the *Jews* to accuse the Law of God as being sinful; because, if there had been no Law, there could have been no Transgression. For though by the Law was the *Knowledge* of Sin, and it was also the Occasion of Mens committing Sin; yet, as *St. Paul* there argues, *the Law was holy, and the Commandment holy, just, and good.* The same may here be said of *Temptations*, or of all those Things which are the Occasion of Mens Sins; which *St. John* comprehends under these three, Pleasure, Riches, and Honour: *For all that is in the World, the Lust of the Flesh, and the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life, is not of the Father, but is of the World.* One or other of these, is the Foundation of every Sin that is committed. But every one of them is in itself good, and appointed for a wise and good End; and they receive the Denomination of Evil, only from the Excess or Abuse of them. They are like all other *Means* or *Instruments*, entirely in the Power and at the Disposal of the Workman. He may wholly neglect them, and they will of themselves decay and come to nothing; or He may apply them to a wrong Use, and then they will be injurious to himself and others. Neither of which casts any Reflection upon the Author of these Means, nor upon the Means themselves; but the Blame lyes wholly upon Him, who thus voluntarily abuses the Talents committed to him, and frustrates the Intention of his Lord. So likewise with respect to the *Cause* of such Temptations: As all Sin is supposed in Scripture to be from the Devil, so when ever any Number of natural Causes conspire to produce any very remarkable ill Effect upon Men, especially upon good and virtuous Persons, or any Set of Circumstances happen so advantageous on the Side of Sin, as to lead them into the Commission of some great Offence, this is generally ascribed to the *Devil*; as if the natural Laws of the Creation were at his Disposal, or, at least, as if he had a Power to interpose and disturb the general Order and Harmony of them. But as it is not the Business of Religion to give a philosophical Account of natural Things, it amounts to the same Thing, *whatever* Hypothesis be true in *This Particular* also; whether these Representations be only figurative, or whether they be literally true. For as God himself is the supreme Governor of the World, nothing can be done but by his Permission and Consent. And as He hath subjected the whole Creation to such and such Laws, which are liable to Interruption, and, under some Circumstances, to produce very ill Effects upon Men; and as He intended these Effects should come upon them for their Correction and Advantage, if it be not their own Fault; so it is all one, whether they come to pass by the natural Course of Things, or by the Interposition of any wicked Agent, who, though his Intention be evil, yet is only a mere Instrument, and can go no farther than He is allowed. And so we find this Matter represented in the Book of *Job*. The Design of all those Afflictions and Evils which That good Man suffered, was to render his Virtue the more conspicuous, and to make him capable of the greater Reward; and it is said that *Satan* was the Executioner of them all; yet when the Particulars are enumerated, the immediate Causes are such as might have come to pass by the general Laws of Nature. Thus the Robbers killed some of his Servants, and carried away his Cattle; a Storm of Lightning destroyed a great many

Clarke. many others; a Hurricane of Wind blew down the House, and killed his Children; and a violent Disease seized himself. Now whatsoever was the real physical Cause of all these Things; the Providence of God, and the Patience of *Job*, which are the only Things intended to be manifested, are equally obvious.

The moral Impossibility of preventing Sin. HAVING thus examined the Nature and Original of Sin, and shewn that it arises from a Principle within every Man's Self, which Principle was given him for a very different Purpose, *viz.* to make him capable of Virtue and Happiness; we may now apply what our Saviour says to his Disciples concerning those Offences relating to the Gospel, to all Sins in general: *It is impossible but that Offences will come, but woe unto Him through whom they come.* That is, morally speaking, it cannot be but Men will commit Sin, though God Almighty has done all that was fit for infinite Wisdom and Goodness to do to prevent it; because it depends wholly upon the Liberty of the Agent, which cannot be constrained without being destroyed; and therefore the strongest and most powerful Motives may be resisted; and Instances of Persons that do actually resist such Motives, there always were and always will be: But woe be unto them in so doing; *it were better that a Mill-stone were hanged about their Necks, and they were cast into the Sea.* That is; As the Fault is wholly within themselves, there being no Evil originally in the Temper of their Minds or Constitution of their Bodies, no Want of Knowledge or Instruction from the Dispensations of Providence; so all the Consequences of Sin, every Evil that attends it, must be ascribed to themselves. Which is the next Thing we are to consider.

Of the Consequences of Sin. THOUGH not only the original Being, but the continual Preservation of Mankind, is wholly owing to the Goodness and Loving Kindness of God; and He might deprive them of that Being and Happiness which were his own free Gifts, whenever he pleased; yet there was no Reason to apprehend his doing it, so long as Men continued to observe his Laws, and to promote the Ends of their Creation. But after the voluntary Commission of Sin, contrary to the Judgment of their own Minds, and the known Laws of God; Men could not but be uneasy, from the Consciousness of their own Guilt, and the Expectation of what was to come. They had by this means forfeited all Right to the Favour and Protection of God, and were become obnoxious to the Sentence of the Law, that is *Death*, considered as the Punishment of their Transgression: So that their State and Condition is by Sin very much changed. For whereas before, they considered God Almighty as the most beneficent Being, who would confer new Blessings upon them, proportionably to their Improvements; they now consider him as a Judge who will exert his Authority, and vindicate the Goodness and Justice of his Laws, by inflicting such Punishments as their Sins deserve. Nothing therefore remains for them, but like Criminals and Prodigals to leave themselves wholly to his Mercy, and to depend upon his infinite Pity and Compassion. But what Effect this would have, and what the particular Consequence of it would be, could not be certainly known by the bare Light of Nature and Reason; as is evident from the great Uncertainty and Perplexity of the Heathen World. For though they seemed to come now and then pretty near the Truth, *viz.* by resolving all into the Mercy and Goodness of God, and hoping there would be a future State, in which every Thing should be set right; though this, I say, was very agreeable to Reason, and in itself an Argument very strong and conclusive; yet, for want of the additional Testimony of Divine Authority, which might be level to the Capacities of all, and have a stronger Influence upon them, it vanished like a Dream, and their Hopes were swallowed up by their Fears. But this whole Matter is set in its true Light by the Gospel, and so clearly stated there, as to afford us sufficient Answers to all the Objections of our Adversaries.

Of the unequal Distribution of Things in this present Life. THE most unsurmountable Difficulty, which gave so much Occasion of Triumph and Insolence to wicked and prophane Men, and was the Cause of so much Uneasiness and Despondency in religious and virtuous Persons; was the unequal Distribution of Good and Evil in this lower World; so that the just and the un-

& See Tully's *Tusculan Quæst.* Book I.

just

just were equal Sharers of many of the common Gifts of Providence, and in particular Instances the latter had oftentimes great Advantages. Thus *David* observed *the Prosperity of the Wicked*; and *Solomon*, that *all Things came alike unto all*; and the Prophet *Jeremiah*, that *the Way of the Wicked prospered, and they were all happy that dealt very treacherously*. Were this Life the Whole of Man, it would indeed be extreme difficult, if at all possible, to reconcile these Things with the Proceedings of an infinitely wise and good and powerful Being: And therefore this Consideration is a very conclusive Argument on the other hand, that since we are assured from the strongest Proofs, that such an all-perfect Being does exist, it is absolutely impossible but He must make a final Distinction betwixt the Righteous and the Wicked; which since He has not done here, there must be a future State, wherein it shall be done with the utmost Exactness and Impartiality. The Arguments of the Heathen Moralists in this Respect therefore, were wholly beside the Purpose: It was like judging of a Fabrick, or the Skill of the Artificer, before it is half built; or like determining the general Happiness or Misery of a Man's Life, from observing a few Days or Hours Prosperity or Adversity. But Revelation furnishes us with a clear Answer to that great Difficulty: *Life and Immortality is brought to Light by the Gospel*. We have there the greatest Assurance given us, that Death does not put a Period to our Beings, in the visible Instance and Experience of *Christ's* being raised from the Dead. This one Particular, is of so great Moment, as to give an entire Turn to the whole Scene of human Affairs. For with Regard to this, we see them in a different Light, and with a contrary View to what they appeared before. It is true indeed, that Virtue and Vice are essentially different from each other; and, were they freely permitted to produce their genuine Effects, Happiness would be the unavoidable Consequence of the one, and Misery of the other, to all intelligent and free Agents: But where there is such a compounded Creature as Man is, it cannot be, but that the natural Course of Things must be often interrupted and disturbed. And that it is fit they should be put right again, we can very easily conclude from Reason: But the particular Manner of doing it, and the particular Time in which it shall be done, these the Father has put in his own Power. Infinite Wisdom is best able to judge of these; and it is not for us to know or determine concerning them, 'till God has revealed them to us.

Clarke.
Psalms
lxxiii. 3.
Eccles. ix.
2. xii. 1.

2 Tim. i.
10.

Acts i. 7.

By such Revelation we are assured, that this World is not the Place, nor this Life the Time for Judgment; and therefore it is in vain for us to pretend to pronounce concerning the spiritual State of Men, or the Methods of Providence, from what we observe concerning them here. God Almighty has appointed a Day in which all Men shall be called to give an Account of their Behaviour in this present Life, which cannot be done 'till they have finished their Course, and therefore it must be reserved to a future State. Wherefore to suppose Men to be rewarded or punished here according to their just Demerits, either by the natural Course of Things, or by the perpetual Interposition of Providence; is to take away all Foundation of a future Judgment, and to anticipate the Proceedings of that solemn Day. That it might have been so ordered, that Rewards and Punishments should have been the constant Attendants of Virtue or Vice; there is no doubt: And some extraordinary Instances there always have been, and perhaps always will be, of such Judgments, to serve some particular Ends and Purposes: But the infinite Wisdom of God saw it most fit upon the whole, to let Things go on in their usual Course to a certain determinate Period, and then to separate them from each other, or to put them upon a new Foot. Thus we observe it is in the *natural* World: The whole material Creation is subject to certain Laws, which may be so interrupted, or in Length of Time Things may be so degenerated, that the Effects of those Laws may be very irregular and confused, and they no longer able to serve the Purposes originally intended by them: And then will it be necessary either to restore the several Parts to their primitive State, or to impress other Laws upon them, whereby new Heavens and a new Earth will be formed. The same may be applied to the *moral* World. It is fit that intelligent and free Beings should be left to themselves for a Season, that they may have

*This Life
not the
Time for
Judgment.*
Acts xvii.

Clarke. Opportunities of exercising those Powers and Faculties they are endued with; and when the Integrity of the Virtuous has been sufficiently tried, and the Slothfulness of the Wicked patiently born with, then will be the Time for distinguishing finally the one from the other. And though this may seem to us to be at too great a distance, and perhaps be some Discouragement to virtuous Persons, and some Encouragement to vicious ones; yet it would certainly be worse if Things were otherwise. According to that Comparison of our Saviour's, between the Tares and the Wheat: The Weeds often flourish more, and destroy some Part of the Corn; yet it is not right to pluck them up, lest the Corn be plucked up with them, but to let them grow together 'till the Harvest, and then to separate them, the one for the Barn, the other for the Fire. It is our narrow Conceptions of Time, and partial Consideration of ourselves, that make us judge so wrong in these Matters; whereas *a thousand Years in the Sight of God are but as yesterday*, and Mankind bear but a small Proportion amongst the rational Creatures in the Universe. God therefore is not slack (as Men count Slackness,) but He will fulfil his Promise when the Time is accomplished, and all Things ripe for it. This Objection therefore against the Course of Providence, is altogether as weak, as it would be to object against Civil Governments, by which publick and stated Seasons are appointed for the Trial and Punishment of Criminals; that Justice is not done, because a Criminal is not punished as soon as the Offence is committed, but the Punishment is deferred so long, that He who should weakly compare the Time with a Day or an Hour, would be apt to think that it would never be executed at all.

*The true
Uses to be
made of
temporal
Judgments*

*Acts
xxviii. 4.
John vii.
24.*

John ix. 3.

Luke xiii.

THUS the Gospel gives us a clear Solution of this grand Difficulty, and teaches us to consider the Prosperity of wicked Men and the Adversity of good Men, in another and a quite different View; and to make very different Uses of them. We see continually how apt we are to judge our Brethren, and to pronounce them Righteous or Sinners, according to the Good or Evil that befalls them here. If any very great Calamity or extraordinary Accident happens to any Person, we are ready to think it a particular Judgment, and that the Hand of Providence interposes to punish him in so singular a Manner; just as the Barbarians said of St. Paul, when they saw the Viper lay hold of his Hand: *No doubt this Man is a Murderer, whom though he hath escaped the Sea, yet Vengeance suffereth not to live.* But this is judging according to the Appearance only, and not righteous Judgment. Virtue or Vice proceeds out of the Heart; which as we cannot see into, so we cannot certainly determine about them. The first Motions and Intentions of the Mind are invisible to us, and therefore our Conjectures may be very false and groundless. For this Reason our Saviour is very express in warning Christians against making any such Judgment of each other; in the Instance of the Man that was born blind, concerning whom the Jews asked this Question (taking it for granted that it was a Punishment for some Sin,) *Who did sin, this Man or his Parents, that he was born blind?* The Answer takes away the Foundation of all such Enquiries: *Neither hath this Man sinned nor his Parents; but that the Works of God should be manifest in him.* Providence had brought this to pass, for a very different Purpose; viz. to give Occasion to Jesus Christ to demonstrate that He was the Messiah, by miraculously curing him. And the same may be said of the Galilæans, whom Pilate slew as they were offering Sacrifices in the Temple; and of those eighteen upon whom the Tower in Siloam fell. In the present Course of Things, such Accidents must often happen; Wherefore instead of condemning such Persons, we should learn from their Example, that we ourselves are liable to the same Evils, and repent lest we also perish; that is, so prepare ourselves by a timely Reformation of our Lives, that if any such Calamity overtakes us, we may be prepared against it. Thus we see both from Reason and Scripture, that the Afflictions and Sufferings of good Men in this Life, when the Nature and End of them are duly enquired into, cannot properly be styled Evils: For upon the whole they are either over-balanced by a much greater Good, or are converted into or made the Occasion of extraordinary Advantages to him who chearfully undergoes or rightly applies them. It is very seldom, in this present Life, that any Man receives more of such Evils at the Hand of God, than he

he receives Good. So far as Providence is concerned in them, they are generally no more than Chastisements, to correct our Mistakes, to put us in mind of the Uncertainty of all Things here, and to excite us to the Love and Practice of Virtue. But if there does happen an extreme Case, the Gospel furnishes its Professors with extraordinary Motives: Such Persons *shall receive an hundred Fold in this Life*; and their *Affliction which is but for a Moment* (compared with Eternity) *shall work for them a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory*. And as for the Afflictions which Men bring upon themselves, through Carelessness and Violence and Abuse, (which if duly examined into, will I doubt appear to be the far greatest Number;) there is no need of vindicating Providence with respect to these; Every Man's own Experience can tell whence they proceed.

THE only remaining Evil to be considered, is that of Punishment: And this is manifestly occasioned by Sin, and is the just and necessary Consequence of it. It is fit and reasonable that the Practice of Virtue should be secured by all possible Means; and it becomes the Governor of the World to suit and apply those Means in such a Manner as He sees most proper to attain the End proposed: According to that of the Wise Man, *God hath made all Things for himself*, (or, as it should have been rendered, has made all Things corresponding to each other,) *even the Wicked for the Day of Evil*. The first End of creating Man, was, that by a due Exercise of those Powers and Faculties, which God has given him, upon their proper Objects, according to the essential Difference of Things, and in Obedience to the Will of God; he might be happy in such Enjoyment as necessarily arises from the Practice of Virtue, and be moreover entitled to the free Additions of positive Rewards, which a most beneficent Being can confer upon him. And had Men acted upon these Principles, there would have been no need of any other Law: They would then have been the most perfect that their Natures were capable of, by conforming to the eternal Reason of Things, which is the Rule of Action to God himself, and consequently the most acceptable to him. This therefore, as St. Paul says, we ought to know and understand, *that the Law is not made for a righteous Man, but for the Lawless and Disobedient*. Whilst Men are free from Sin, they can be under no Apprehension of Punishment: It is the Consciousness of Guilt that creates such Fears, and the Practice of Iniquity that is the real Foundation both of the threatening and of the executing any Punishment. This being so, it is evident, that Men voluntarily bring this Evil upon themselves: God is not the Author of it, neither can the most gracious Being take any Pleasure in inflicting it. Sinners have made it absolutely necessary; There could be no Government without it, no Vindication of Truth and Right, no Reformation of careless and inconsiderate Persons. Wherefore if we would form a true Judgment of the Nature and Use of Punishment, we must consider it with Respect to God, who is Governour and Judge of the World; who, as He knows the Circumstances and Condition of all his Creatures, so He obliges them to no other Laws but what are in themselves most just and reasonable. The first Motives to obey them, are such as proceed from the highest Love and Good-will; And if these will not prevail, it is not fit that his Authority should be despised, his Laws trampled under Foot, and the obstinate Sinner quietly permitted to insult over them. Neither is it fit, with Regard to the *Sinner himself*, that He should go on in a continued Course of Iniquity, without any Controul or Restraint. If he has darkened his own Understanding, and so far overborn the Dictates of Reason and Conscience, as not to see and feel the Reasonableness and Obligation of Virtue; his Mind is in an unnatural and diseased State, and ought to be treated like a distempered Body. It must first be made sensible by strong and violent Impressions, and afterwards have proper Motives applied to induce it to practise; 'till its Powers and Faculties are grown strong, and can freely exert themselves upon their proper Objects. Such Punishment as this, is evidently for the Good and Benefit of the Sinner; and therefore there is no more Ground for Complaint in this Particular, than for a sick Person who has by his own Carelessness and Inadvertency brought a Distemper upon himself, to complain of the Harshness of the Remedies, or the Severity of his Physician, because they are attended with a great deal of Pain and Uneas-

Clarke.

Matt. xix. 29.

2 Cor. iv. 17.

Of the Evil of Punishment.

Prov. xvi. 4.

1 Tim. i. 9.

Clarke. Uneasiness. *Lastly*, Punishment may be considered also with Respect to *Others*, as necessary to deter them from doing the like Things and falling into the same Condemnation. And thus the Example of some few Persons may be of great Use to save Multitudes, as we see practised by the best civil Governors; and of which there are many Instances recorded in Scripture, as brought to pass by divine Providence. So that here likewise Punishment has its Use, and ought not to be accounted any real Evil; because if it be not Mens own Fault, they may reap Advantage from it. It is the mixing of Cruelty, Revenge or Malice, with the Idea of Punishment, which renders it disagreeable to the true Notions we have of the Perfections of God. For if we separate these from it, and suppose the Punishment to be of such a Nature, and inflicted in such a Manner, as is most conducive to encourage the Practice of Virtue, and discourage the Practice of Vice, it is perfectly consistent with all the Attributes of the Deity. I have but just mentioned these Particulars, because they are, I think, pretty well agreed on; And if there were no other Sort of Punishments than these, our Adversaries would be content. But the great Difficulty with Them, is the Punishment threatened to Sinners in the New Testament, to be inflicted upon them in a future State.

Of the Punishment threatened to Sinners in the Gospel.

THIS the forementioned Author represents as utterly inconsistent with the Notions we have of the Wisdom and Goodness of God: viz. ^b *That he should will, from all Eternity, that Man should sin; that This Sin should be infectious. — The Consequence of which, is the producing all the Miseries that human Life is incident to here, — and a Hell hereafter, wherein all Men, almost, shall be eternally tormented, in such a Manner as is most terrible and shocking.* The former Part of this Objection, so far as it concerns God's willing that Men should sin; and concerning the *Infection* of Sin; has been already considered. And the latter Part, comes properly under the present Head of Discourse; and if duly examined, will appear to be a very unfair Representation of what is said in the New Testament, which alone discovers this Matter to us. And first, as to the Number of Persons that shall be miserable in a future State; that it will be *almost all Mankind*; this is nothing but mere Conjecture, neither is it any Thing to the Purpose. The Declaration in Scripture is only in general, that all who obstinately and finally reject or abuse the Gospel Means of Salvation; every wilful unrepenting Sinner, shall be punished with the Punishment there threatened: But it mentions no Particulars, or, if it does, it is in such Similitudes as make no such hard Supposition. Wherefore it is very uncharitable in Us, to determine so severely of our Fellow-Creatures. It is impossible for Us, to know the spiritual State and Condition of our Brethren. The Tempers and Dispositions of their Minds are secret and invisible. It is a few external Actions only, that we can judge of: And though *some of these* are so plain, that we cannot be deceived in them; yet we cannot know what Mens Conversation has been *upon the whole*, or what future Opportunities such Persons may have of repenting. At least how Few are They, whose Circumstances with Regard to Religion, we have sufficient Means of knowing, compared with the whole Bulk of Mankind; and much less, if compared with all the past Ages, or with what may be still to come? It is therefore very unreasonable to condemn at a Venture, the far greatest Part of Men, and to pronounce them subject to the highest Wrath and Displeasure of God: Neither does the Scripture countenance any such severe Censure. In the Parable of the Ten Virgins, five of them are represented as wise, and five as foolish: And in the Parable of the Nobleman who called his ten Servants, and delivered them ten Pounds to occupy in his Absence; one only is said to have laid up His in a Napkin: And in that of the Wedding; amongst the whole Multitude that were called in from all Parts, there is mention made but of one whom the King saw without a Wedding Garment on. Whence it is evident that the Design of these Similitudes was not accurately to determine the Number of good and bad Men, as they will really appear at the great Day of Account; but only to shew that all those, how many or how few soever they be, who have abused the Talents committed to their Charge,

at. xxv.

Luke xix.

Mat. xxii.

^b Bayle's Dictionary, Remark F. under the Word *Paulitien*. Le Principe unique que vous admittez &c.

shall

shall be punished proportionably to their Neglect or Contempt. Neither is this Clarke.
 Objection at all to the Purpose for which it is brought. It goes upon this weak ~
 Supposition, that Mankind is the whole, or, at least, the most considerable Part
 of the rational Creatures contained in the Universe; and consequently that the Mi-
 fery or Destruction of Them, is the Destruction of the *Whole*: Whereas in Truth,
 they are the lowest and the smallest Part, no more than the Dust of the Balance in
 the material World, compared with those *thousand thousand Spirits that minister* Dan. vii.
unto God, and the ten thousand times ten thousand that stand before him. 10. The Mi-
 fery therefore, or the utter Extinction of the whole Race of Mankind, would be
 no more, with Respect to the several Ranks and Orders of intelligent Beings in
 the Universe; than this Earth's returning to its original Chaos, or its entire Dissol-
 ution, would be with Regard to the Stars and Planets, which are without Num-
 ber. So that unless we could see the Connection there will be in another State
 between Men and other Intelligences, it is in vain to attempt to resolve such *par-*
ticular Questions. But that which is sufficient to content any reasonable Person
 in this Matter, is this: Let us suppose that it could have been put to every Man's
 Choice, either not to exist at all, or to exist in the Manner He does now, endued
 with such Faculties and Powers of Mind and Body, subject to such Laws, and
 capable of such Abuses; and that the highest Happiness He could be advanced to,
 and the greatest Misery He was to undergo, with the Terms and Conditions of
 each, were set before Him: and that He was left to his Liberty, to chuse whe-
 ther He would exist in such a State or no. What would it be *reasonable* for Him
 to determine in such a Case? Either we must say, that the State of *irrational*
 Creatures is preferable to that of intelligent ones; and the Enjoyment of the for-
 mer, superior to the Happiness of the latter: (Whence it will follow, that the
 meanest and most inferior Part of the Creation, every Animal or Vegetable, every
 Stock or Stone, is in a better and more eligible Condition than Man; nay, that
 even not to have existed at all, had been in itself much preferable to his present
 Existence, with the Prospect of that Happiness which Reason suggests, and Reve-
 lation confirms to Him: Or else we must affirm the present State of Man, with
 the *Views* which Virtue and Religion afford, to be such as a wise and serious Per-
 son would willingly embrace, and thankfully receive from God as a gracious Be-
 nefactor, notwithstanding all the Evils and Calamities which it is attended with.
 This, I say, it would be reasonable to affirm, even though Virtue and Religion
 were a Task and Burthen *arbitrarily* imposed upon Men, and all the Afflictions
 of Life were sent upon them without any useful Design: Because every Man has
 such a natural Desire of Happiness, that when he is sure it is in his own
 Power to acquire the highest Degree of it, there are no Difficulties or Hardships
 which he will not cheerfully encounter. But in Truth, the Difficulties which a-
 rise in the Practice of Religion and Virtue, are such as proceed necessarily from
 the different Circumstances and Conditions of Persons; and could not be prevent-
 ed: And the natural Evils and Calamities are such, as the present Laws of the
 Creation necessarily subject Men to. This Part of the Objection therefore is en-
 tirely groundless; and supposes that Happiness is a mere arbitrary Thing, to be
 conferred at Pleasure; and that there are no *Means* or *Conditions* necessary, nor
 any *Qualifications* requisite in the *Subject*.

BUT that which seems to have the most Stress of all laid upon it, is the *Dura-* Of the Du-
tion of the Punishment to be finally inflicted on wicked Men, *viz.* 'That they ration of
 are to be *eternally* miserable in the most extreme Degree of Misery, without any the Punish-
 Intermiſſion and without End. This is objected to be utterly inconsistent with ment.
 the Justice of God; and to bear no Proportion to the Crimes committed. But
 this is arguing concerning Scripture in the same unreasonable Manner, as in the
 former Instances: It is judging of the plain Places by the more difficult, instead
 of the difficult by the more plain ones. Nothing can be more clearly expressed in
 Words, not possible to be misunderstood by the meanest Capacities, than the ge- Acts xvii.
 neral Proceedings of the last Day: God hath appointed a Day, in which He will 31.

* See Bayle's Dictionary, Remark E. under the Word *Paulitiens*.

Clarke.
 Rom. ii.
 6, 7.
 Rev. xxii.
 12.

judge the World in *Righteousness*: Every Man shall then give an Account of his own Works: The Sentence shall be so just and impartial, that all Mouths shall be stopped: The Sinner himself shall be forced to confess that his Condemnation is just; and all the Inhabitants of Heaven and Earth shall openly acknowledge, that the Judge of all the World has done right. After such particular and solemn Declarations as these, of the most exact and impartial *Equity*; can there be the least Reason to suspect, that there should be any *Injustice* done to Men? Must not all other Places of Scripture, in which the Circumstances or Particulars of this Judgment are expressed in Terms obscure or figurative, be referred to, and explained by, these clear and infallible Rules which must never be departed from? This single Consideration vindicates the Holy Scripture from all Aspersions, and removes all the Objections, even supposing that some *particular* Expressions could not be accounted for. But we may consider farther, that since the Things of a future State are, as St. Paul says, ἀρρητα, *unutterable*, such as we can have no particular Ideas of, and consequently no Words fully to express them by; The Happiness or Misery of that State can be signified to us only in general Terms, and by such Figures and Similitudes as are taken from the several Degrees of Happiness or Misery here. And thus we find it in Scripture: The *Happiness* of Heaven is compared to all the various Things, in which Men *Here* place their greatest Delight: Which yet are no more than mere Allegories. And the Punishment of the Wicked, is likewise represented after the same manner. And as our Saviour conversed with the *Jews*, so the Particulars are taken from the known Customs amongst That People: As is plain from the 5th of St. *Matthew*; where the three Degrees of Punishment, as distinguished by the *Jews*, are mentioned in their Order, *viz.* the *Judgment*, the *Council*, and *Hell-Fire*. These evidently show, that in a future State there will be Degrees of Punishment proportionable to every one's Desert; The severest of which, will be That here represented under the Character of *Hell-Fire*; which alludes to the *Tophet* mentioned 2 *Kings* xxiii. 10. which was in the Valley of *Hinnom*, where the cruel Custom of sacrificing Children to *Molech* obtained, and it was therefore defiled by King *Josiah*; so that for the future, a Fire was kept continually burning in it Day and Night; and every Thing that was refuse and vile, was cast into it. To this Place is That Hell, which is prepared for those degenerate Sinners who are beyond all Means of Conviction and Reformation, compared. Which, as it agrees in other Circumstances, so does it likewise in this, That it will be *eternal*. Which Word we find used in Scripture in various Senses, but especially in these *Two*; either to signify the whole Duration of the Existence of any Being or Thing, in any particular State; or else to signify the whole State itself, in which that Person or Thing exists. Each of which, may be applied to *That Punishment*, which is threatened to the Wicked in a future State. But whatever the particular Meaning of these, or any other Phrases relating hereto, be; which were not intended to give us a natural or physical Account of these Things, but only to be moral Motives or Inducements: That which is of itself sufficient to encourage the Virtuous, and to discourage the Vicious, and to justify the Wisdom of God, if duly attended to and applied, is; that in dispensing both Rewards and Punishments in the future eternal State, the most strict Regard shall be had to the past Actions and Behaviour of every Man, and all particular Circumstances will then be distinctly considered.

That Sinners have no Reason to expect any thing more to be done for them.

Isaiah v.
 3, 4.

THUS I have gone through what I at first proposed upon this Subject; and have endeavoured to give such Answers to the Objections that have been made, as the Nature and Reason of the Thing would allow. And now, I think, we may venture to appeal to the impartial Judgment of every serious Person, in the Words of the Prophet *Isaiah*, which are very applicable to the present Purpose: *And now, O Inhabitants of Jerusalem, and Men of Judah; judge, I pray you, betwixt me and my Vineyard. What could have been done more to my Vineyard, that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth Grapes, brought it forth wild Grapes?* Let every Sinner thoroughly examine his own State and Condition, what his natural Powers and Faculties are, what they are

are originally capable of, what additional Means and Opportunities he has had put *Clarke.* into his Hands to employ and improve them; and then let him show where the Fault lay, and who is to be charged with the Evil of Sin, and with the Consequences of it. There have been some Persons so extravagant as to imagine, that the Divine Providence ought to interpose in such a Manner, as actually to hinder every Man, either from entertaining so much as any Thoughts of sinning, or, at least, if He attempts to commit any Sin, to hinder him effectually from committing it: So that under an infinitely powerful and good Government, no such Thing should ever have been. But this Supposition contains in it a great Number of Absurdities and Contradictions; every one of which, entirely overthrows the Supposition itself. For if we consider it with respect to the *Attributes* of God; His Power and Goodness must not be separated from his Wisdom and Justice. So that the Question is not, what infinite Power *can* do; but what is fittest and best to be done upon the whole: Which is all that is reasonably to be expected. So also with respect to the *Subject*: To have made Man so perfect a Creature, as that He should have had no Disposition, or no Opportunity of committing Sin; had been not to have made Man at all, but to have made only the highest of intelligent Beings: Whereas there can be no Reason assigned, why all the Variety of Creatures possible should not be made; and each of them dealt with in the best Manner, that their several Stations and Circumstances will permit. So likewise with regard to the *Nature* itself of *Virtue* and *Vice*: These are founded in the essential and unchangeable Relations of Persons and Things; and they suppose a voluntary Compliance or Forbearance in the Agent, from an inward Conviction in the Mind itself, of the Fitness or Unfitness of the Action. Here therefore there can be no such Thing, strictly and properly speaking, as Compulsion or Force of any Kind: For these are absolutely inconsistent with Liberty; and whenever these are exercised upon any Person, he from thenceforth becomes only a mere passive Instrument. What is done in This Way, is neither virtuous nor vicious in *him*: He has no Satisfaction nor Guilt upon his Mind, and can neither be rewarded nor punished for it. All that is possible to be done in order to produce Virtue and to hinder Vice, can be only by a just and fair Representation of the different Nature and Effects of each of them, by perpetual Exhortations, repeated Persuasions, promising of Rewards, and threatening of Punishments, and the like: All which, are fitted to induce a free Agent in a moral Way; but they cannot be the efficient Cause of any Thing done by him. If Men are not influenced by such Means as these, they then become utterly incapable of being made virtuous and happy. And to imagine that God Almighty should by his own absolute Power, work such a Change in their Minds and Hearts, as that for the future they should become good Men; is indeed to suppose, not a *moral*, but a *natural* Creation. Such a Person would not be changed, but destroyed, and a new Person created in his Room. And the same Absurdity follows with Regard to the *Powers* and *Faculties* of Mens *Minds*. To suppose that they should be perpetually over-ruled, and hindered from producing their genuine Effects; is the same thing as not to be endued with them at all. Thus a vicious Person cannot by any external Means be hindered from thinking or doing wickedly, but such as are equivalent to destroying the Powers and Faculties of his Mind. So long as He continues of an obstinate Temper and Disposition, it is impossible to make him see the Beauty, and understand the Truth of Religion and Virtue; and so long as He is resolved not to conform to the Rules of them in his Practice, he cannot be made to do so: For then, in each of these Cases, it would not be so much his own Understanding and Practice, as another's understanding and practising for him. *Lastly*, The same may be also said of the *Means* of *Conviction*. It is a very great Mistake, to think that if there could be greater Evidence given of the Truth of Religion, it would prevent Men from falling into such gross Sins, and prevail with them to embrace and obey its Precepts: For both Reason and Experience shews us the contrary. There is a certain Sort of Evidence and a certain Degree of it, which is both proper and sufficient to convince every rational and serious Person: And all Others are incapable of Conviction; and therefore it is to no purpose to apply it

to

Clarke. to them. The Fault does not lye in the *Testimony*, but in the *Subject*: And a Man who has destroyed his Sight, may as reasonably complain that the Sun is not light enough, because he cannot see to walk by it. Such Complaints as these are nothing but mere Excuses: And if such unreasonable Expectations as these were really gratified, this would be so far from producing what is imagined, that it would much more probably produce the contrary Effect. The *Jews* are a remarkable Instance of this: *Master, we would see a Sign of Thee*, was their Demand, when greater Signs than what they asked, were done before their Eyes every Day. Had therefore their unreasonable Request been granted, they might have been confounded; but there is no Reason to think they would have been convinced, but only have sought out for another still more absurd Pretence. Thus we see that there is no End of making Supposition of what *might* be done, in order to have the State both of Persons and Things better; and that all the Hypotheses of Mens framing, are attended with vastly more and great Inconveniences, than the Way Things are already in. Whence we ought to conclude, that all Things are under the Direction of an infinitely wise and good Providence; which, having all the various Changes of them in one View, orders them to the best Advantage possible.

Mat. xii.
38.

The Conclusion.

I SHALL conclude the Whole with this one Inference, which plainly follows from the Principles hitherto laid down: *viz.* That as all the Parts of the *material* World are subject to those Laws which are prescribed to them by divine Providence, the regular Execution of which Laws forms one convenient and beautiful Fabrick; So likewise are the several Parts of the *rational* World, (*viz.* every intelligent Agent,) under the Inspection and Government of the same good Providence. Which Consideration is alone sufficient to support the virtuous Person in every State, and to make the Vicious self-condemned. For since Virtue and Vice are founded in the essential Differences of Persons and Things, and have a natural and necessary Tendency in themselves to make Men happy or miserable; but the Existence of the Persons and Things themselves are arbitrary, and depend entirely upon the Will of the Supreme Being: It cannot be, but that the same infinitely wise and good and powerful Being, who gave them such Powers and Faculties, and suited the respective Objects to them; will have exact Regard to their Compliance or Non-compliance with those eternal Rules, and make them the Measure of his Dispensations of Rewards and Punishments; so that the *Ends of Providence*, and the *Nature of Things*, must be finally the same. This Foundation cannot be shaken by all the Artifices of wicked and profane Men; because it is laid upon a Rock. The Tendency of every one of their Hypotheses, is in Reality to subvert the essential Difference of Virtue and Vice: For they are all calculated to serve this single Purpose, *viz.* to cast off the Guilt of Mens Sins from themselves. But, as the Prophet says, they may as easily make *Light* to be *Darkness*, and *Darkness* *Light*, *Bitter* to be *Sweet*, and *Sweet* *Bitter*. And if they will not be convinced of This sooner, it will be made appear at the great Day of Account, that what the same Prophet says of the *Jews*, may proportionably be applied to all Mankind: that *God has planted them as a Vineyard in a very fruitful Hill, which He fenced, and gathered out the Stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest Vines, and built a Tower in the midst of it, and made a Winepress therein; and He looked that it should bring forth Grapes, and it brought forth wild Grapes.* They have frustrated his Intentions, and rendered all he has done for them useless: Therefore they have just Reason to expect, *he should take away their Hedge, pull down their Wall, and tread them under foot.* Let every Sinner examine himself, and impartially declare, if this be not his Case: And if it be, let him endeavour to escape this Judgment, before it be too late, and the Things that belong to his Peace be hid from his Eyes.

Isaiah v.
20.

† 1, 2.

*The Pretended Difficulties in Natural
or Reveal'd Religion no Excuse for
Infidelity.*

SIXTEEN

S E R M O N S

Preached in the CHURCH of

Saint Mary le Bow, London;

In the Years 1721 and 1722.

A T T H E

L E C T U R E

Founded by the HONOURABLE

ROBERT BOYLE, Esq.

B Y

B R A M P T O N G U R D O N A. M.

Chaplain to the Right Honourable THOMAS
Earl of *Macclesfield*, Lord High Chancellour of
G R E A T - B R I T A I N .

V O L. III.

B b b b

TO
The RIGHT HONOURABLE
RICHARD, *Earl of* BURLINGTON;

The Right Reverend Fathers in GOD
CHARLES, *Lord Bishop of* WINCHESTER,
EDMUND, *Lord Bishop of* LINCOLN,
SAMUEL, *Lord Bishop of* CARLISLE,
AND
WHITE, *Lord Bishop of* PETERBOROUGH;

T R U S T E E S

Appointed by
The Most Reverend Father in God, *THOMAS*
late Lord Archbishop of *Canterbury*; the last
surviving TRUSTEE Named by

THE HONOURABLE
ROBERT BOYLE, Esq;

THESE
S E R M O N S

Are most humbly Dedicated.

S E R M O N I.

The Pretended Difficulties in Natural or Reveal'd Religion no Excuse for Infidelity.

I TIM. iv. 8.

-----*Godliness is profitable unto all Things, having the Promise of the Life that now is, and of that which is to come.*

THE Subject which I propose to discourse upon is of the last Importance and Concern for all of us to be satisfy'd in; for 'tis no less than *this,* Gurdon.
S E R M.
I.

I. WHETHER Men at first either grew out of the Earth spontaneously as Trees; or that there has been *always* a Succession of Men and Women upon Earth, propagated after the same manner, as they are at present; or whether a Wife and Intelligent BEING sent us into this World.

2. WHETHER we are to go, as the *Materialist* contends for, to the Place *quo non nati jacent*; or whether, as the religious Man believes, there is to be another State of Being for us after this short Thread of Life is wound off.

IF any Prejudices were allowable, they would certainly be in this Controversy between Us and the *Atheists*, where all the Advantages to Mankind are on the Side of Religion; and nothing but Darknes and Despair in the *Atheist's* Scheme of Things. The Profitableness of Godliness, or of living under a Sense of religious Principles, and the Unprofitableness of Infidelity, may be made very plain to us, tho' we should suppose that we may be mistaken in believing them true. And for these Reasons:

1. BECAUSE nothing but such a Belief can carry a Man thro' the Difficulties and Miseries that human Life is subject to.

2. BECAUSE the Belief of religious Principles restrains a Man from no Enjoyments but such as would be hurtful to him and make him uneasy.

3. BECAUSE living under a Sense of Religious Principles will make a Man's Mind easy with regard to any Apprehensions of a Future State.

1. THAT nothing but the Belief of Religious Principles, *viz.* of GOD and a Providence can carry a Man through the Difficulties and Miseries that Human Life is subject to. If a Man makes the least Reflection upon the State and Condition of his Life, he will presently see that he has not sufficient Power of himself to procure his own Happiness. That there are many Things which are able to hurt him, and he neither knows how to secure himself against them, or to acquit himself of them, when they have attacked him. There are many Evils he must own himself obnoxious to, because he sees others oppress'd by them. If there was no GOD or Providence to have Recourse to in this disagreeable Prospect of Things those whom we all of us allow to be Animals inferior to ourselves would have greatly the Advantage of him, for as they have no Foresight of Future Evils, so they could have no Forethought about them, nor torment themselves with any Fears of what may be hereafter; whilst

Gurdon. whilst our continual Anxiety and Sollicitude about Future Evils would make
 SERM. the Life of Man appear to be a Scene of Things perfectly dismal and
 I. without any kind of Hope, if *without a God in the World*.

THE Author of the *Characteristicks* has fairly own'd that there cannot be a Compleat Virtue without Piety or the Belief of a God and Providence, that those Virtues which should support us in Adversity, such as Fortitude, Patience and Contentment under our Condition, would probably lose their Effects upon us, if we had nothing to trust to but Chance or a blind Necessity; that they would be converted into a natural Kind of Spleen and Abhorrence of every Thing in the World, and imbitter our Tempers to that Degree as to ruin the very Principle of all Virtue, so as instead of Fortitude and Patience, the *Atheists* Scheme in his Opinion would produce Impatience and Rage, "Nothing, says he, * indeed can be more melancholy than the Thought of living in a distracted Universe from whence many Ills may be suspected, and where there is nothing that can raise any Passion besides that of Contempt, Hatred or Dislike. Such an Opinion as this may by Degrees imbitter the Temper and help to impair and ruin the very Principles of Virtue." Speaking of the Belief of a God and Future State, he says † "by Virtue of this Belief Man may retain his Virtue and Integrity even under the hardest Thoughts of Human Nature", but in the other Scheme, "upon disastrous Occasions and under the Circumstances of a hard and calamitous Fortune 'tis scarce possible to prevent a natural Kind of Abhorrence and Spleen ||." And in another Place, "That 'tis not possible to retain the same Firmness or Constancy of Mind, which Religion would naturally give a Man ‡". Thus we see, if this Author's Observations (who has no small Credit with our Free-thinkers) have any Weight in them, what must be the Behaviour of a Man in Adversity, and what must be commonly expected from one that acts upon the *Atheistick* Scheme: Instead of Constancy and Firmness of Mind under Afflictions, we must expect to find the *Atheist* raging and cursing his Stars, acting more like a Madman than a wise and sober Person, we must expect that he should lose his Temper, grow sours and melancholy, and consequently uneasy to himself, and every one that has any Thing to do with him. And is not this a Charming Prospect of Things, and enough to induce a Man to part with his Religious Principles, that instead of behaving under Afflictions with Decency and Dignity, if we will turn *Atheists* we may hope to lose our Tempers, grow impatient, contract a Sort of Dislike and Abhorrence of every Body and every Thing: But if we desire to keep our Tempers in all States of Life, and to do nothing that we shall have Reason to be ashamed of, we must live and act with a View to the Principles of Religion; it being impossible with any other Principles to keep up a good Composure of the Affections, or any Uniformity in our Minds as the above mention'd Author observes.

EPICURUS himself could not forbear saying, that he thought it better to believe the Fable of the Heathen Gods than to submit to that blind Necessity which our Modern *Atheists* seem to be so fond of (in his Letter to *Menecæus* given us by *Diogenes Laertius* in his Life) because, he says, there is Hopes that the Gods may be prevailed upon by Worship and Prayer, but the other, *viz.* Necessity is deaf and inexorable to all Applications†. And tho' he did not much mend the Matter by his introducing the Clinamen or Oblique Motion of his Atoms, in order to secure the Liberty of our Minds, yet the Force of Truth extorted this Confession from him, that the Fatality which *Leucippus* and *Democritus* had introduced, and which is still maintained by our *Atheists* did reduce Mankind to a most hopeless and miserable Condition; that it would be even better to embrace Superstition, for such was the Heathen Mythology, than to be tied down to the Laws of an unrelenting Necessity.

* Enquiry concerning Virtue, p. 70.

† Ibid. Vol. 2. p. 71.

|| Page 73.

‡ Page 76.

† Κρείττον ἢ τὰ περὶ Θεῶν μύθων, κατακολουθεῖν, ἢ τῶν φυσικῶν (meaning the *Stoicks*) ἀναγκὴν δεδαιμένον, ὁ μὲν γὰρ ἐλπίδα παραιτήσεως ὑπογράφει Θεῶν δια τιμῆς, ἡ δ' ἀπαραιτήτην ἔχει τὴν ἀνάγκην.

THE *Atheist* when he is called upon to give an Account of the general Con-
 sent of Mankind in the Belief of a G O D and Providence is forced to assign such Gurdon.
S E R M.
I.
 Reasons for it as plainly shew him very sensible of the Profitableness of Godli-
 ness or Religious Principles, as first *, When he accounts for the Introduction
 of Religion, by Mens Fears and Sollicitude about Future Events; he must own
 it to be his Opinion that it would be for the Benefit of Mankind that some Be-
 ing should exist who could order and dispose of all Events, to whom Men might
 address themselves for Relief, and in whom they might take Refuge, as being
 able to protect them against every Accident. Whereas the Fear and Concern
 about Future Events which themselves suppose to be natural to us, would en-
 crease upon us, grow worse and worse, if we were once persuaded that Future
 Events were under no Direction but subject to the Caprices of Fortune or what
 would be as bad for us, the unalterable Laws of a blind and unthinking Necessi-
 ty, because in such a Case there is nothing to apply to, nothing to trust in:
 For as these Atheistical Deities bring about every Thing without knowing all
 the while what they are doing, it can be to no Purpose to make any Applica-
 tion to them or hope for any Relief from them. In order to amend this ill State
 of Things the *Atheist* tells us Mankind found out this Expedient of making
 themselves believe that there must be some other Agent besides this material
 World, which they were sure could not help them; and tho' they could not
 see him doing any Thing, that yet he did all, directed the Motions of the Hea-
 vens, manag'd all Events here upon Earth, and was able and ready to relieve his
 Creatures when they called upon him for Help. What Proof we have for a
 G O D shall be afterwards shewn, by which it will appear to stand upon the best
 of Evidence, and therefore that Fear was not the only Cause of introducing
 Religion among Men. It is enough for my present Purpose that we have the
Atheist acknowledging the Advantages of Religious Principles for supporting
 Men against the Fears of Future Evils, and consequently the Being of a G O D
 and Providence is what of all Things ought to be desired and wish'd for by
 us all.

ANOTHER Account they are wont to give of the General Consent of Man-
 kind in the Belief of a G O D is that Legislators and Politicians persuaded Men
 there was a God as such a Persuasion was thought to be the best Means of keep-
 ing Societies in order and in Obedience to the Laws. This too is a plain Ac-
 knowledgment from them of the Profitableness of Religious Principles, since the
 wisest Men such as the Founders of States were, saw no Way of securing the
 Peace of Societies but by making the Principles of Religion a Part of the Civil
 Constitution; and Mr. *Hobbs* tells us how those Religious Principles preserved
 the Peace of Societies in as much as the People when they were under any Mis-
 fortunes or Calamities, and were therefore most inclined to Mutiny, would not
 blame their Governors † but rather attribute their Misfortunes to their Want
 of Respect to G O D, to their Omission of some Religious Institution or some
 Mistake in performing it. I think a higher Commendation of Religious Prin-
 ciples cannot possibly be given than the making them necessary to the Peace of
 Societies. And the *Hobbist* above all others must acknowledge the Necessity of
 embodying for our mutual Security, because according to his Scheme, every
 Man is an Enemy to every other Man in a State of Nature. Every Man has a
 Natural Right to whatever he can get by any Methods whatsoever; there being
 according to him no such Thing as Right and Wrong, Just and Unjust, before
 Men enter into Society, nor consequently any Thing but their own Interest to
 hinder them from being a Plague and Vexation to each other. Having now
 seen some of the Advantages of Religious Principles for our Support in the
 uneasy Parts of Life, it may be fit to see what those Advantages are which the
Atheist proposes by his Scheme as an Equivalent for what by his own Confession
 he must deprive himself and others of by his Disbelief of a G O D and Provi-

* Primus in orbe Deos, fecit timor.

† Per has similesq; Institutiones ad finem suum, nempe Pacem Civitatis, hoc saltem obtinuerunt, ut populus
 Calamitates suas Errori alicui vel neglectui in agendis sacris — attribuens minus contra Rectores suos incitaretur,
Leviathan, p. 60

Gurdon. dence, and by endeavouring to draw others into the same Degree of Infidelity.
 S E R M. *Plutarch* tells us his Design is to free himself from Fear, that he might stand
 I. in Awe of no Body, and be at full Liberty to do what he pleas'd *. This
 leads to the Second Advantage of Godliness, viz.

T H A T the true and Genuine Notion of a G O D has nothing frightful in it, that it restrains a Man in no Enjoyments but what would be hurtful to him and make him uneasy, and therefore that a Man can be no Loser by being a Believer, if it should prove at last that there is to be no after State. That *Plutarch's* Observation was a just one, or that the *Atheists* Unwillingness to admit a G O D arises from a frightful Notion that he entertains of him, is evident from the *Epicureans* continually representing Religion as a grievous and heavy Burden. Thus *Velleius* in *Tully de Natura Deorum*, lib. 1. pag. 48. says, That those who had introduced a Governor of the World, had made Mankind perfect Slaves †. So *Lucretius* in the Beginning of his first Book, represents Mankind as sinking under the heavy Load of Religion, grovelling upon the Ground, not able to look up or lift up its Head for fear of the terrible Aspect of a God appearing from above, and that this was the miserable Case of Man till *Epicurus* appeared ‡. And the same Writer speaks of *Epicurus's* curing Men of the Fear of a G O D as the most signal Piece of Service that was ever done for Mankind †. But there is nothing can be more false than this Representation of G O D and Religion. 'Tis true indeed our Holy Writings speak of Religion under the Phrase of the Fear of God. But then this is not the Fear of an Arbitrary Being who has no regard to the Good and Welfare of others. 'Tis not the Fear of an Omnipotent Tyrant, that acts by Humour and Passion, but the Fear of a wise and good B E I N G, that always governs himself by the unalterable Rules of good Sense, such a Fear as should restrain Men from playing the Fool and hurting themselves, from violating the Laws of Reason, and confounding the Moral Differences of Things. And such a Fear no considerate Man ought to be concern'd at, for a Fear of this Kind is greatly for the Advantage of Mankind, as it tends to the keeping the World in Peace and good Order, and hindring them from injuring one another; 'tis the Fear of a just B E I N G who threatens Punishment for doing such Things as would turn to our real Detriment; 'tis the Fear of a kind Father, who knowing better than ourselves what is good for us and what would be mischievous to us, leads us to our Happiness and keeps us from hurting ourselves by the Fear of offending him. This is the true and genuine Fear of a G O D; what Advantage then would it be to any Person if he were deliver'd from such a Fear. Every Man that thinks at all would rejoice that there should be such an Object of his Fear as might keep his Passions and Appetites from doing him Harm, he would see that such a Fear was so far from being Slavery, that 'tis consistent with the truest Liberty, and the best Preservative of it, and that without it, it would scarce be possible to secure the Freedom of our Thoughts and Actions. Whenever this Fear is attended with Jealousies and Suspicions of the Deity, as an imperious and arbitrary B E I N G, that rather delights Himself in the Miseries than the Happiness of his Creatures, it then ceases to be a religious, and commences a vicious Fear, or what we are wont to call Superstition.

'T I S against this last Sort of Fear, that the Arguments of *Lucretius*, and of all Sorts of *Atheists* are directed. For they, laying it down as a certain Truth, That there is no such Thing in Nature as Moral Differences, no Right or Wrong, Just or Unjust, separate from Pleasure and Pain, Convenience and Inconvenience, it would then indeed follow, That if there was a G O D, He could have no Moral Qualities, nor be oblig'd to act in Virtue of them. If there was a Being distinct from the World, and endu'd with a Power of doing every Thing; yet there could not be a just Being, if there be no such Thing as

* Τὸ μὴ φοβεῖσθαι θεόν, μὴ φροσύνη.

† Itaque imposuistis in Cervicibus nostris sempiternum dominum, quem dies & noctes timeremus.

‡ Primum Graius homo mortales tendere contra est Oculos ausus.

† Nos exæquat Victoria Cælo.

Justice (abstracted from the Laws of Civil Government.) If there existed an *Gurdon*. infinite Intelligence, yet such Intelligent Being could make no Distinction between Right and Wrong, if there really be no such Thing as Right and Wrong in the Nature of Things; and then what should we be the better for such a Being? Or rather, should we not probably fare better, if we were without such a Governor as acts by mere Will and Pleasure? That these Notions are justly charg'd upon the antient and modern *Atheists*, may appear by a Quotation from each of them *Cotta in Tully de Natura Deorum*, pag. 98. *Davies's* Edit. tells us, one Opinion of the *Epicureans* was, That there was no such Thing as Benevolence or an Obligation to do Acts of Kindness; but that whatever appears of this Kind, arises merely from Weakness*; and therefore, if there was any such Thing as a God, there could be no such Thing as Love or Benevolence in him; because as He would be all-powerful, He could want no one's Assistance, stand in Need of no Body, and therefore care for no Body. And thus again, Mr. *Hobbs* in his *Leviathan*, and his Book *De Cive*, p. 260, 262. founds all the Right that God has of governing us, upon his Almighty Power; and all the Obligation that we have to obey him, upon this, That we cannot help it, his Power being irresistible†.

Thus we see the *Atheists* Dressing up God in a frightful Shape, that they might have the better Colour for Denying his Existence. But I have already shewn, that this is a false Representation of Him; that when He is represented as He ought to be, and such as He really is; that He is the most amiable BEING in the World; such a BEING as every considerate Man would heartily wish for, and would even part with all the World, rather than give up the Belief of Him; as the Want of such a BEING would rob him of a most comfortable Prospect in a Time of Difficulty and Distress, and in a Time of Prosperity take off that Restraint from his Appetites and Passions, which is absolutely necessary to keep them from hurting him.

HITHERTO I have shewn the Profitableness of Religious Principles, and (consequently) the Disadvantages of those of the *Atheists* on the Supposition, that they could fully persuade themselves of the Truth of their Scheme: But, if after all the Pains they take to disown a God, they cannot set their Minds easy from the Fears of Him, then the Profitableness of living under a Sense of Religious Principles, and the Disadvantages of *Atheism*, will receive a new Degree of Evidence: Which was the third Advantage of Religious Principles that I propos'd to discourse upon, viz. That the Belief of them will set the Religious Man's Mind at ease with Regard to any Apprehensions of an after State.

THE Histories of all Times, and all Countries inform us, That there constantly has been a Belief of some future State, in which Men were to be accountable for their Behaviour in this. I am not now to consider, Whether this Apprehension in Mankind be agreeable to the Truth of Things, or any good Proof of them: I am at this Time only to consider, What Effects such an Apprehension may have upon Mens Minds. And I think it must be granted me, That whilst Men have such Apprehensions, they cannot be indifferent or unconcerned what is to become of them in this after State, no more than a Man can be indifferent with Regard to his Happiness or Misery in this present one. And therefore, unless the *Atheist* can give us a sure and certain Method by which we may get entirely rid of such Fears, he must acknowledge his Scheme to be neither calculated for the Good of himself nor any Body else. For I have already shewn the Advantages of a true and genuine Fear of God, for the better Conduct of our Lives; and if the *Atheist* is willing to give up those Advantages, so as he might free himself from the Fears of an after Reckoning, we might expect that he was sure of gaining this Point: But the Histories of all Ages shew us, that the Convictions of Mens Consciences are not to be silenced by such weak and trifling Reasonings as the *Atheists* Scheme is built upon:

* Cum in imbecillitate gratificationem & benevolentiam ponitis.

† Deo omnipotenti jus dominandi ab ipsa potentia derivatur: manifestum est Obligationem ad præstandam ipsi Obedientiam incumbere hominibus propter imbecillitatem.

Gurdon. The Apprehensions of a future State have taken too deep Root in Mens Minds
 S E R M. to be overturn'd by any Speculations of Men; and I will venture to say, That
 I. the *Atheist* himself, with all the Confidence he pretends to have in the Truth
 of his Scheme, cannot insure himself for Life against the Fears of a future
 State, and for this plain Reason, That he cannot prove it to be impossible,
 that such a Being as GOD (in the Religious Notion of the Word) should exist:
 For if he cannot have an absolute Certainty of that, neither can he have any
 of the other. The Case being this, there can be no Difficulty in shewing, That
 the Principles of Religion are better calculated for the Ease of Mens Minds,
 with Regard to a future State, than those of the *Atheist*. For the Man that
 lives under Religious Principles, has a comfortable Prospect: If his Apprehen-
 sions be just, he knows that he is made for ever, that his Happiness will be
 beyond the utmost of his Conceptions, and the Continuance of it to all Eter-
 nity. And if his Thoughts of the Matter should prove nothing but a Mi-
 stake; yet his Belief has made him pass off Life with more Satisfaction than
Atheism can afford a Man, and it can be at last no worse with him than the
 other.

LET us now take a View of the Unbeliever, with Regard to the Appre-
 hensions of a future State: As I have already observ'd, That he cannot de-
 monstrate the Impossibility of a Life after the Conclusion of this present one,
 the Supposition of its being *barely* possibly to be true, must give him now and
 then an uneasy Thought, for Fear that Possibility should arise; and whenever
 such a troublesome Thought disturbs him, I know of no other Way he can take
 to make himself easy, but by persuading himself, either 1st, That no Man is
 under any Obligation of Reverencing or Honouring GOD, tho' there should be
 One; or else, if he dares not trust to that, That *he* is under no Obligation, be-
 cause not believing there is a GOD, he cannot pay any Reverence to Him. As
 to the first of these Excuses, I believe the *Atheist* will find it hard enough to
 make himself believe, that no man is under an Obligation of honouring Him,
 if there really be One; for if there be such a BEING, the Relation that we
 stand in to Him, and the Obligations we have received from Him, will make
 it fit for us to express our Thankfulness and Acknowledgments to Him.

I AM sensible Unbelievers do not allow what we call moral Differences; but
 then this is upon Supposition that their Material Scheme is the true one, and
 that there is no GOD, or no Supreme BEING endued with Moral Perfections.
 But if there should be such a BEING, the *Atheist* may be, for any thing he
 knows, answerable to this BEING for denying his Existence, and in Consequence
 of that, for paying no Reverence nor Acknowledgments to Him for the Fa-
 vours received from Him. For if there are any moral Differences in the Nature
 of Things, and they are judg'd of by the Supreme Understanding such as by o-
 ther understanding Beings, making only an Abatement for the Difference between
 a finite and infinite Understanding; that is, Suppose we know what Justice is in
 GOD, we must believe that it is unjust to deny Reverence to the Supreme BEING,
 as well as it would be Injustice to refuse our Acknowledgments to any Friend or
 Benefactor for any Kindnesses we have received from him. And it can't be
 thought but that the Supreme (as well as other Beings) must make a Difference
 between those that honour Him, and those that deny his Being and Authority
 over them. For if GOD has constituted any moral Differences in Things,
 He has thereby sufficiently declared that it is his Intention to act suitably to those
 Differences. The Thing is so evident, that the Learned and Unlearned have a-
 greed in honouring the DEITY. *Tully* has long ago told it as a certain and un-
 doubted Truth, That if there is a Supreme and Eternal BEING, He is to be had
 in the greatest Reverence and Admiration by Mankind*. And even *Epicurus* †
 himself wrote a Book of Piety towards the Gods. If he wrote this Book for no
 other Reason than to screen himself from the Publick Odium, yet it shews thus
 much, That it was the general Belief of People at that Time, that the DEITY
 ought to be honoured. And that this Belief was well-grounded, will after-

* *Tully de Natura Deorum. Lib. 1.*† *De Divinatione. Lib. 2.*

wards appear, when I come to prove a real Difference in the Nature of Things *Gurdon.*
between Virtue and Vice. *Vide Serm. XI.* *SERM.*

I CANNOT forbear making one Remark from what has been said, which is this: That supposing there are any Persons of so perverse an Understanding, as cannot persuade themselves of a GOD and Providence, that they should not give themselves much Trouble in drawing Men off from such a Belief; because, by their own Confession, Mankind was brought into this Belief for their own Good, that they might relieve themselves from the Uneasinesses which human Nature is subject to. If they make any Pretensions to Good-nature, or have any Love for their Species, they should be contented to believe themselves in the right, without using any Endeavours to draw other Persons into a Scheme which is so dismal and without all Comfort, as theirs is; they can lie under no Obligations of Conscience, because they make shew of Denying all moral Differences; and therefore if they were not a Set of four and ill-natured People, they would be contented to be miserable by themselves, and leave the rest of Mankind in the quiet Possession of so agreeable a Delusion as that of a GOD and future State. I can see but one Thing they can urge for themselves, which is, That tho' a right Notion of Religion would be really beneficial to Mankind, yet Superstition is more destructive of the publick as well as private Quiet of every Man than *Atheism* itself: And for the Truth of this, they refer you to *Plutarch* in his Treatise, *de superstitionibus*, and to the visible Effects of it, wherever it has prevailed. They add further, That the Histories of every Age have convinced them, that Mankind is a Creature that is more apt to be influenced by a superstitious, than by a religious Fear. And therefore, the Odds in human Nature being on the Side of Superstition that 'tis not safe trusting it with any Religion. The Answer to this is very easy, That if the Fears of Superstition, are the only Reason of his rejecting religious Principles, then instead of setting himself against all Religion, let him endeavour to set the World right in their Notions of Religion, and we will heartily joyn with him in so laudable an Undertaking. And, as I hope the Danger of Mens falling into Superstition may be much lessen'd by our joynt Endeavours; so I am sure, the above-mentioned Advantages of true Religion will sufficiently justify us in the Attempt.

S E R M O N II.

I THE S. V. 21.

*Prove all Things : hold fast that which is good.*Gurdon.
SERM.
II.

THE Reasonableness of Observing this Rule of our Apostle, is grounded upon this undoubted Matter of Fact, That there has been always a Mixture of Truth and Falsehood in the World : That there have always been Persons who have endeavour'd to propagate false, as well as true Doctrines, and therefore no Safety in holding fast any Opinions, before we have carefully prov'd and examin'd them.

IF our Apostle might have a particular View to the trying of Revelations or divine Inspirations ; yet this Advice of his will equally extend to every Subject that is proposed to our Consideration ; and if we are guided by it, we shall never give our Assent to any Proposition, till we have fully and fairly examin'd it ; For if, as in the present Case, which the Apostle seems particularly to refer to, we suppose a Man led into Error by some mere Pretender to Inspiration, if it would not, I say, be a good Excuse before GOD, that he believed such a Person inspired, and practis'd amiss in the Virtue of such a Belief, because he ought to have examin'd his Credentials, and proved his Spirit, whether it was of GOD, or not ; neither would it be a good Justification of a Man, if he should plead, That he acted suitably to his own Opinions ; unless 'twas also true, that he had carefully examined them before he espoused them ; because every Man will be as much concerned to avoid Mistakes concerning the Truths of Natural, as well as those of Revealed Religion. And he that assents to either upon any other Motive than that of Evidence, altho' he should embrace the Truth, as this is purely accidental, may be answerable to GOD for not making a due Use of his Faculties : For St. Paul's Rule is, *To prove all Things : and then to hold fast that which is good.*

WE who are guided by St. Paul and the rest of the inspired Teachers, do require, and press upon all Persons a thorough Examination of the Arguments on which Religion is built : We desire nothing more than a fair Trial, and are willing to abide by the Success of it. And therefore the Author of the Discourse of *Free-Thinking*, is a Slanderer of his Brethren, when he would insinuate, as if the Religious Man was averse to a free and impartial Examination of Religious Truths. We desire Men would examine with the utmost Strictness ; we only desire them to lay aside all Partiality, and every Prejudice ; we are only against Licentiousness in Thinking, as we are persuaded, That a Man may as well abuse his Freedom in Thinking, as he may his Liberty in Acting ; as I shall have Occasion to shew in Considering another Evasion the *Atheist* has to avoid the Apprehensions of a future State, viz. That a Man cannot deserve Blame or Punishment, so long as he acts consistently with his own Opinion, or that himself cannot deserve Blame or Punishment for not Honouring GOD, because he does not believe there is one.

FOR if this Excuse be a good one, one of these two Things must be true, either 1st, That a Man cannot deserve Blame for acting accordingly to his Opinions, how groundless soever they be. Or, 2^{dly}, Because he had made a due Examination

Examination and Trial of this Question, and could find no Evidence for a *Gurdon*.
GOD. SERM. II.

As to the first of these: Let us see what Grounds the *Atheist* can have to hope for Impunity, merely because he acts according to his Opinion, when he refuses Respect to a Supreme BEING.

I MUST confess, I cannot see much in the Argument used by some great Men against incurring this Blame and Punishment, viz. they advise the *Atheist*, That he should strive to have Faith and believe to the utmost; because, if after all there be nothing in the Matter, there will be no Harm in being thus deceived; but if there be any thing, it will be fatal for him not to have believed to the full: And my Reason is this: Because the Person we advise to believe, is supposed at best to be doubtful, whether there is a GOD and Providence; And how then can the Man believe them, who at the same time is not persuaded of their Truth; but rather believes there is no such Thing? For if a Man should affect to believe, what he does not believe, there is little Reason for thinking that such a Procedure would be agreeable to GOD; because this would be acting against the Light of his own Mind, which no one that believes a GOD, will suppose to be a probable Way of recommending any one to his Favour.

I SHOULD rather advise the *Atheist* to examine carefully, What were the real Motives that prevailed upon him to quit the Religion he had been educated in, and to take up with Infidelity? Whether a sincere Love of the Truth, or rather some secret Passion had influenced him? If he would deal fairly with himself in this Self-examination, I am persuaded he would find, that the Alteration of his Opinion is not so much owing to any rational Conviction of his Mind, as to some vicious Inclinations, which had made Arguments appear weighty to him, which would pass with other People for mean and trifling; as I shall afterwards shew when I come to consider the Arguments by which he pretends to support his Material Scheme.

IN the mean time I am to shew, That there are many Motives besides rational Evidence, which have determin'd Men to the Opinions that they espouse, and consequently, that this Evasion of the *Atheist*, viz. That a Man cannot deserve Blame or Punishment for acting agreeably to his Opinions, cannot be relied upon by any prudent or considerate Man. And then the *Atheist* can never secure himself against the Apprehensions of future Punishment upon this Foot of Reasoning.

WHEN I am shewing, that a Man may be answerable for his Opinions, and for what he does in Virtue of them; I would not be thought to assert, That 'tis in any Man's Power to believe what he has a mind to believe; for his Belief and his Opinion must depend upon the Evidence, such as it appears to the Man: and yet thus much is certain, That a Man may deserve Blame for his Opinions, if he has not duly qualified himself for Evidence when 'tis offered to him. As,

1st, IF when he is enquiring after Truth, he suffers himself to be byass'd by any predominant Passion or Appetite; for these are known to make Men deaf to the plainest Evidence of Reason. Or,

2^{dly}, IF thro' Laziness he declines a full or thorough Examination of any Question in which he is much concerned. That these may be, and often are, the true Causes of many Persons Infidelity, will appear probable, by considering some of the Motives which too often govern Men, with Regard to the Persuasions or Opinions that are held by them: The Prejudices which I shall at present consider, as having a great Influence upon us, and which may lead Men into an Inclination for the Principles of Infidelity, are these:

1. AN Affectation of Singularity; which is wont to take much with such Persons as desire to be distinguished by being thought to see farther than their Neighbours.

2. AN Aversion to the Errors that have crept into true Religion, has insensibly led many Persons into a total Disbelief of all Religion.

Gurdon. 3. A DESIRE of being independent, and uncontrollable by any one: When
 SERM. this meets with Persons of an imperious Temper, 'tis a strong Temptation to
 II. Infidelity.

WHENEVER any of these prevail, they must be allowed to be false Grounds of Persuasion, and for which a Man will be justly accountable, if there be a Supreme BEING to whom an Account is to be given for the Use, or Abuse of our understanding Faculties.

1st. AN Affectation of Singularity is wont to have a powerful Influence upon a Man's Opinions, especially when it meets with a proud Temper.

A MAN must have pass'd his Life without much Reflection upon human Nature, that has not observed, That Men are more commonly influenced, as to the Opinions they hold, by some predominant Passion, than by any Conviction from the Principles of Reason. The striking out into a different Way of Thinking from the rest of Mankind, flatters the Vanity of a proud Man with this pleasing Imagination, That he shall be thought to see farther than any Body else. For he that contradicts any received Notions, expects the World should believe, that he does so, because he reasons with greater Freedom and Impartiality than other People; and the more generally received the Opinions are which he opposes, the greater Credit he hopes to gain by it; and therefore, Religion having been the general Persuasion of Mankind, is for that Reason the fittest Mark for the proud Man to point his Arguments against: for the Fewer he has on his Side, the more he hopes to shine, as he knows a Man is apt to be lost in a Croud, and that if he would be taken Notice of, he must stand single, or have but Few in his Company.

THE Author of the Discourse about *Free-thinking*, has acknowledged this secret Temptation to Infidelity, when he would put it off as the common Opinion of Mankind, that the *Atheist* has more Sense than other People. For, says he, *if any good Christian happens to Reason better than ordinary, they* (meaning the Christians) *charge him with Atheism*. He takes this sly Way of commending the *Atheists* for good Reasoners in suggesting that those very Persons who believed a God and future State, could not forbear owning *Atheism* to be the Effect of good Reasoning, and the *Atheists* better Reasoners than other People. How weak and groundless soever this Notion may be of Mens being better Reasoners in proportion as they believed less of a GOD and Providence; yet thus much may be observed from it to my present Purpose, That some Persons may have been, and still are tempted to appear on the Side of Infidelity, from the vain Hopes of being thought more discerning and sagacious than the rest of the World.

MONSIEUR Bayle, whose Writings will free him from any Suspicion of being over partial in the Cause of Religion, does honestly acknowledge, That the Infidelity of many People is owing more to some Degree of Vanity, and a Desire of distinguishing themselves, than to any Force of Evidence: and nothing can be truer than what he has said upon this Occasion in his *Historical Dictionary*, "It is plain enough, says he, that those who make a Shew in Company of opposing the most common Truths of Religion, speak what they do not really think; their Vanity has a greater Share in their Debates than any Conviction of their own Minds; they please themselves with the Thoughts that the Boldness and Singularity of the Opinions which they defend, will gain them the Reputation of great Genius's, and of Men of a superior Way of Thinking to the rest of Mortals. Thus they are tempted against their Consciences to set forth the Difficulties which the Doctrines of Providence and those of the Gospel are subject to; so that by Degrees they get a Habit of speaking impiously: And if their Vanity be attended with the Love of Sensuality, they go on faster in their Impiety." Thus far Mr. Bayle speaks in relation to an ingenious French Libertine, and to all of that Sort in the Title *Des Barreaux*. The *Atheist* has perhaps heard too, That the *Epicurean Atheist* was wont to impute the Belief of a GOD to Mens Ignorance of the Powers of Matter in Motion; and therefore hopes by the Denial of Him, to acquire a great Reputation for Knowledge.

ANOTHER common Fountain from whence Infidelity is wont to arise, is, *Gordon.*
 An Aversion to Superstition. Some Men do no sooner discover the Errors that *SERM.*
 are crept into true Religion, than they conceive such an Aversion to these Er- *II.*
 rors, as that they begin to suspect all the rest to be a Mistake, and from being
 Enemies to Superstition, become Enemies to all Religion in general. This I
 take to be the most usual Way by which Men arrive at a State of Infidelity;
 but this is an unjustifiable Proceeding in any one that pretends to be a Lover of
 Truth; because it supposes that where there are Errors, there can be no Truth.
 There are Errors in all Communities of Men professing Religion, therefore there
 can be no Truth at all in Religion itself; Men have made great Mistakes in
 the Pictures they have drawn for the DEITY, therefore there can be no DEITY
 at all; because they are sure there cannot be a GOD with human Weaknesses,
 therefore there cannot be one with divine Perfections: They might with as
 much Justice argue, That because there is a Wrong, there can be no such Thing
 as a Right.

BUT they are not only unjustifiable, when they have no better Reason for
 leaving us, but also (which I believe will concern the *Atheist* more, because it
 reflects upon his Understanding) they shew great Weakness when they are byas'd
 to Infidelity by their Aversion to Superstition, as this shews a great Defect in
 Point of Judgment. For when Men flee from one Extream to the other, when
 they take Refuge in *Atheism* out of an Hatred to Superstition, the Reason must
 be because they know not how to distinguish what is true from what is false.
 They find they have not Skill enough to take off the Disguise from Religion,
 to separate the Appearance from the Reality; and therefore finding they must
 take all or none; the Hatred they have conceived against the Errors they have
 already detected, prompts them to quit Religion entirely, as the only Way for
 such poor Reasoners to be secure against Errors in Religious Matters. This is
 the true Reason and Foundation of that Observation so often made, That where
 there is most Superstition, as in *Italy*, *Atheists* are most frequent; because the
 Generality of People are apt to conceive so strong a Prejudice against any
 Cause, how just soever, when they discover any Fraud used in the Support of it,
 that they immediately conclude the whole to be a Cheat. Their Aversion for
 the Fraud, makes them overlook all the Arguments that can be given them for
 the Support of the Truth; as if it was an Impossibility in the Nature of the
 Thing, for evil Men to defend the Truth by a Falshood. But this has so often
 happened in the World, that no Man can be accounted a fair Examiner that re-
 jects Religion merely upon this Account.

3dly, A DESIRE of being uncontroll'd and unaccountable as to their
 Thoughts and Behaviour, tempts some Persons to the Denial of GOD's Exist-
 ence. Men of haughty and imperious Tempers would be Monarchs to them-
 selves, they care not to believe themselves obliged to any Body, and therefore
 are fond of the Material Scheme, as it sets them at full Liberty from all Obli-
 gations; for no one can think himself obliged to any Being merely for doing
 for him what it can't help doing. Atoms by luckily jumbling together for my
 Good, or the necessary and unalterable Laws of Matter in Motion producing
 all that we see, tho' I received never so much Benefit from them, could lay
 me under no Obligation of Gratitude to them; I should still be under the fullest
 Liberty of Thinking and Acting as I liked best; (if any such thing as Liberty
 were consistent with either of those Schemes:) But if a Man should acknow-
 ledge an Intelligent BEING for his Creator and the Author of all the Comforts
 he meets with in Life, he cannot forbear thinking sometimes that some such
 Submission may be due to Him, as may restrain his Fulness of Freedom in
 Thinking and Acting.

AND this St. *Evremont*, who was never thought to be troubled with Be-
 lieving too much in Religious Matters, acknowledges might be a Temptation
 to Persons of an imperious Temper; if he was truly the Author of a Treatise
 ascribed to him *, where it is said, " That there are others who in an extrava-

* Vid. Curious Miscellanies.

Gurdon. "gant Presumption of their own Abillties, scorn to depend on their MAKER;
 SERM. " vainly imagining, that the Obedience that is paid to this Infinite MAJESTY,
 II. " must necessarily take away the Freedom of their Thoughts or Opinions."

~ We have already seen by the Confession of *Lucretius* *, that the Desire of being in a State of Independence, and of having none to controul them, was a great Inducement to many Persons to enter themselves in the School of *Epicurus*; and we cannot doubt but the same Cause is still working the same Effect in the Children of Disobedience: Especially as to those who are Libertines in Action as well as Thought, who desire to gratify every irregular Appetite, and to extinguish the Clamours of their Consciences, 'tis their Interest to throw off the Belief of a God and turn *Atheists*: as long as they have any Reason left, they must for Peace and Quietness Sake endeavour to perswade themselves, that there is no Superior Understanding to take notice of and animadvert upon them for acting against the Sense of their own Minds. *Atheism* is the only Refuge they have to take to; for so long as Men will act against their own Understandings, they must wish that there were no Understanding Being to observe what they are doing: but these are the Fools, which the *Psalmist* tells us have said in their Hearts, *that there is no God*.

THE Use that I would make of this, should be to advise the *Atheist*, That since there are confessedly vicious Motives that have led Men into their Opinions, that he would examine, whether none of those I have already mentioned had determin'd him to exchange the Religion he was brought up in for *Atheism*. For if he has left it without sufficient Reason, his pleading that he acts according to his Opinion, will not excuse him from Blame and Punishment.

I AM easy to believe, that the *Infidel* will disregard the Advice I have given him of examining what were the Motives that principally occasioned his Infidelity, and may think, that his Mistake, if it should prove such, can do him no Harm. I shall therefore chuse to put him in mind of what Monsieur Bayle says of such as have been drawn into Infidelity thro' any vicious Motives, particularly those he instances of Pride or Sensuality in his *Historical Dictionary*, Title *Des Barreaux*: "That evil Custom, says he, which some Persons had taken up in Conversation of opposing the great Truths of Religion, occasion'd either by Vanity, or a Desire of being thought more knowing than others, or to justify themselves in their Sensuality, may for some time silence the inward Convictions of their Minds, and make them to have entirely forgot what they had learnt in their Youth concerning a GOD, a Heaven and a Hell: but they cannot wholly extinguish the Belief of them, it being only like a Fire concealed under the Ashes, which will quickly shew its Activity, especially when there is any Prospect of Danger; then, says he, we find them Trembling, and more in Fear than any body else; they become then even superstitious:" And he gives this Reason for it; "That the Remembrance of their having shewn more Contempt for Holy Things than others, increases their Uneasiness." If this Observation of Monsieur Bayle's be just and agreeable to Truth, the Advice I have given the *Atheist* of examining the Motives that induced him to renounce Religion, may not be altogether amiss. Because whatever he may think while he is in Health, and out of Danger, he cannot secure himself against the Apprehensions of Punishment, if he has wantonly taken up the Cause of Infidelity.

BUT some one may say, That this Way of arguing against *Atheists*, is entering into the Hearts of Men, and charging them with what may be as easily denied as affirmed; that it is an unfair Procedure with them, because 'tis taking for granted, that a Man must be influenced by some Prejudices whenever he embraces *Atheism*; that this might be with equal Justice retorted upon the Believer, that he too is prejudiced, and willing against Evidence to believe a God, because he wishes there was one, and thinks it would be better for him that there should be one; and therefore that the Argument drawn from Prejudices should be omitted by both Sides.

THE Answer is, That I ought to shew, if I could, that other Motives besides Evidence, might influence men in their Opinions; that such Motives were vicious and punishable if there should be a God: And this, in order to engage the *Atheist* to examine carefully upon what Motives he took up his Opinions: If the Religious Man is under a strong Prejudice to believe a God, and he should be mistaken, his Mistake cannot be dangerous or hurtful to him. I ought also not to have omitted these Prejudices as probable Motives to Infidelity, because many of those who seem to disown all Religion, have been (as we have already seen from the Confession of unsuspected Writers) influenced by some or other of them.

IF there are any others who have from any thing like a serious Consideration wrought themselves into a Belief, That this Frame of Things might have either casually fallen into the Order we find it in, or necessarily have existed such as it is from all Eternity, they are not concerned with what has been said under the Head of Prejudices, and shall be distinctly considered by themselves, when I come to consider another Evasion of the *Atheists*, viz. That after the best Enquiry, he could find no Evidence for a God, and therefore could deserve neither Blame nor Punishment for being consistent with himself, in not paying any Respect to One whom he did not acknowledge for God.

HAVING considered certain Prejudices which might be supposed to have determined many of those who have espoused the Cause of *Atheism*, it cannot be amiss to put them in mind, That their Ancestors in Infidelity supported their Principles by Reasons which our Modern *Atheists* must acknowledge to be false, and therefore were certainly to blame in concluding against a God upon such Reasonings, as a further and more careful Examination into Nature would have discovered to be false. This should discourage the modern *Atheist* from being over-confident in his Scheme, lest further Discoveries in Knowledge should make his Cause less defensible, and himself culpable for determining hastily against a God, before a full and thorough Examination of the several Particulars on which he is wont to ground his Infidelity. Which brings me to consider another Defect in trying any Question, viz.

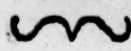
2dly. THAT we deserve Blame, if thro' Laziness we decline a thorough Examination before we take up our Opinions.

IT cannot be doubted that there are in the world Half-Thinkers as well as Free-Thinkers; such as lead themselves into Mistakes, either because they want Abilities or Inclination to make a close Inquiry into Things. The great Lord Bacon places *Atheism* to the account of Short-Thinking, to a smattering in Philosophy. I know our modern Unbelievers would think themselves greatly injured if we charged them with any Want of Ability, and so would their Predecessors; for we find *Lucretius* perpetually Talking with such an Air of Assurance, as if he had actually wrested the Thunderbolt out of *Jupiter's* Hands; and yet he appears to have been a careless Examiner into Nature, when he accounted for the Production of Animals from insensible Matter, by Worms arising from corrupted Carcasses; which was the only Account he could give of Animal Productions, viz. of Life and Sensation*; And yet our present *Atheists* must acknowledge, That he pronounced in this Case as a poor Philosopher, and before he had made a fair Examination: For I think Equivocal Generations are now generally given up. This therefore must pass with our Unbelievers for a Proof, That their Ancestors were in this Respect Short-Thinkers, and took up their Opinions upon insufficient Motives.

THERE is another Instance may be given, in which the *Atheists* have taken up their Opinions before their having made a due Examination; which is this: That nothing could act upon Matter but by Contact; from thence they inferred, there could be no real Being but Matter, or, which would be the same thing, that if there was any thing immaterial in Nature, it could have nothing to do with the Material World; because Matter could be acted upon in no other Way but by Contact, and then nothing but Matter could act upon Matter; and

* Quippe videre licet vivos existere vermes, stercore de tetro putrorem cum sibi nata est, &c.

Gurdon. consequently, an Immaterial Being, which could not act in the Way of Contact, SERM. could have no Efficiency or Action upon Matter : But a farther Examination

II. into the Laws by which Nature is govern'd, has convinced the World, that  Bodies themselves can act upon one another at the greatest Distance from each other, and in another Way than that of *Contact* ; and then it must be allowed, that the Argument built upon it was form'd before a due Examination had been made into the Nature of Things.

A VERY Learned Man and a great Thinker in our Time, who had asserted, " That we might as well conceive that GOD might have added a Thinking " Quality to Matter, as make a material Substance capable of Acting or being " acted upon by an Immaterial one ; because there could be no relation of Con- " tact between such heterogeneous Substances ; " was afterwards convinced, that there was another Way than that of Contact by which Bodies might be acted upon ; as may be seen in his *Posthumous Letters*.

THE Use that I would make of this, is, That in a Matter of so great Concern as that of a GOD and Providence, the Unbeliever would suffer himself to be persuaded to re-examine his Conclusions, and see whether he has not been deceived in any of his Premises. He sees his Predecessors in Infidelity by a closer Inspection into Nature, stripp'd of some Part of that Armour in which they trusted *most* : And how can he be sure, that farther Enquiries into Nature may not still weaken his Cause ? And if thro' Laziness he should decline such Enquiries, and his Opinions should at last prove false, his Neglect will be Criminal, and himself answerable for not taking due Information, before he took his Opinions *for Better, for Worse*.

S E R M O N III.

2 THESS. v. 21.

Prove all Things : hold fast that which is good.

I HAVE already in discoursing upon these Words shewn how we must prepare ourselves for a fair Examination of any Question ; that we must, previously to our Inquiries, divest ourselves of every Prejudice and Passion, suffer no Inclinations, nor any Desires, but those of finding the Truth, to influence our Judgments : That we must be contented in Questions of great Moment, to undergo the Fatigue of a full and careful Examination, and not thro' Laziness decline a thorough Search into the Arguments on both Sides, or draw our Conclusions before we have well considered our Premises.

I HAVE shewn that the Want of observing these Rules, doth often lead Men into Errors ; and that the greatest and worst of all Errors, *viz.* Infidelity, would decrease in its Numbers, and lose a great Part of its Profelytes, whenever the World shall resolve to take up their Opinions from no other Principle but a sincere Love of the Truth. That the *Atheist* ought to lay his Hand upon his Heart, and declare if he can, That nothing but a Love for the Truth *had* determin'd him to exchange Religion for *Atheism* ; and that it concerns him to be sincere in such a Declaration ; because every other Reason for making the Exchange, would render him a Criminal for the Abuse of those Faculties of his Mind which would have directed him better.

I AM now to consider the other Excuse the *Atheist* is wont to make, That he has made the best Enquiry he can, without being able to discover any Evidence for a GOD.

BUT before I consider what those have to say for themselves, who pretend to have taken up *Atheism* after a serious Consideration of Things, I must insist upon this, as a Preliminary to the Debate, That the *Atheist* ought not to bring against us any such Objections, whose whole Strength arises merely from our Incapacity of conceiving the Nature and Operations of GOD ; and for this plain Reason, Because 'tis agreed betwixt us, that we are finite or limited Beings ; and must therefore have limited Understandings : But that the necessarily existing BEING, whoever He is, must be an Infinite and Eternal One, filling all Time and all Place. For there is no denying that Something must have been from Eternity ; because if it were not so, Something must have arisen absolutely from Nothing, or existed without having any Cause or Reason of its Existence : Which is plainly impossible. And yet 'tis certain, we can form no Notion of an eternal Duration already past ; an Argument therefore drawn from our Inability to conceive the Nature of a BEING that has actually existed from Eternity, or to comprehend its Manner of Operation, ought to have no Weight with us, nor be urg'd by the *Atheist*, because his Material God would be equally affected by it. If then he would justify himself, the only rational Inducements that can possibly be assign'd for exchanging Religion for *Atheism*, must be one or other of these :

Gurdon. EITHER for the avoiding some particular Difficulties, which he thinks may
 SERM. be proved to amount to Impossibilities in our Notion of a GOD, and which too
 III. his Material Scheme is not attended with :

OR else, because in general there are far less Difficulties to be gotten over in accounting for Appearances by the material Scheme, than there would be, should we once admit a GOD and Providence. These are the only justifiable Inducements that can be assigned for quitting Religion and embracing *Atheism*. And if the first of these should appear to be such as cannot be defended, and the other to be false in Fact; then it must be granted, that the *Atheist* has not taken up his Material Hypothesis after a fair Examination; and will be therefore highly culpable for not acting with that Ingenuity which becomes a Lover of Truth.

As to the first of these Inducements, I will shew, That it can never justify him in rejecting Religion.

1st, BECAUSE he can never prove that the particular Difficulties he complains of, do amount to an Impossibility or a Contradiction.

2^{dly}, BECAUSE his Material Scheme which he takes up with for avoiding those Difficulties, is attended with infinitely greater ones than those which he finds fault with in our Notion of a GOD.

AND then, as to the other Inducement, *viz.* That in general, there are fewer Difficulties in accounting for Things by a Material Principle; I will shew, that some of the most considerable *Phænomena* in Nature, cannot be accounted for by such a Principle only.

THE first Inducement for embracing *Atheism*, is not defensible, because the *Atheist* can never prove, That the particular Difficulties he complains of in our Notion of a GOD, do amount to an Impossibility or a Contradiction. The chief Difficulties which the *Atheist* is wont to charge upon our Idea of a GOD, are these :

1st, THAT we ascribe Immateriality to Him.

2^{dly}, THAT we allow Him a Power of making Something out of Nothing: Both which are thought by him to be impossible, whenever they are supposed to be the Nature or the Operations of any Thing whatsoever. And

3^{dly}, BECAUSE we make Goodness a Part of his Character; which they think to be sufficiently contradicted by the many Natural and Moral Evils that appear in his Workmanship.

1st, I AM to consider the Difficulties which are raised against a GOD from his Immateriality. If the *Atheist* would prove an immaterial or incorporeal Substance to be impossible or a Contradiction; in order to prove it such, he must undertake the Proof of this Proposition, "Whatever is immaterial, is Nothing." And therefore an immaterial Substance, a mere *Non Entity*. And he must prove this, one of these two Ways; either, That what we have no Idea of, can have no Existence in the Nature of Things; that we have no Idea of an immaterial Substance, therefore there can be no such Thing. Or else he must affirm, That the only substantial Thing in the World is Matter or Body; and therefore an incorporeal Substance would be the same thing as an incorporeal Body: Which must be a Contradiction in Terms.

THE Answer we give to the first of these Objections, is, That we cannot allow them to speak Truth, if they affirm, That we have no Conception of an immaterial Substance. 2^{dly}, That if it were a Truth, it could not be a good Proof of the Impossibility of its Existence.

As to the first of these Objections, we are persuaded, That we as certainly know some of the Properties of immaterial, as we do those of material Substance; that Perception, Understanding, and a Power of beginning Motion, are as certainly the Properties of an immaterial Substance, as Solidity, and a Capacity of receiving and communicating Motion are Properties of Matter or Body. I know the *Atheist* would make all these Properties of immaterial Substance, to be only Qualities resulting from Matter. But as I shall afterwards have Occasion to show, That this Supposition of the *Atheist* is Groundless and Unphilo-

Unphilosophical, I will for the present take it for granted, what shall afterwards *Gurdon.* be proved, *viz.* That these are Properties of immaterial Substance; and as a *SERM.* Consequence of that, that we are able to form some Notion of an Immaterial *III.* Substance *. And as for the Substance itself of an Immaterial Being, it would be in vain and to no Purpose to argue, that we knew nothing of it, or could form no Idea about it; because the same Objection would equally affect Material or Corporeal Substance, of which we know as little as we do of the other.

BUT supposing it never so certain, That we could form no Idea of an Immaterial Being; this would not prove the Impossibility of its Existence; unless it was as certain, That the Faculties of a limited Nature, such as ours confessedly is, could reach to the utmost Extent of every Truth, and no Possibility of Being could escape the Searches of our Understanding. Whereas all the Knowledge we can pretend to have of the Existence of Things *without us*, must be derived to us thro' some or other of the Senses; for these are the only Carriers of all the Intelligence that the Mind receives concerning External Existences. And then which Way will the *Atheist* take to convince any Body, that our Five Senses, are all the possible Ways of receiving Information concerning the Nature and Operations of External Objects. If we should consult our Reason in this Matter, that would probably tell us, That this particular Number of Informers was rather calculated for our present State (in which we find ourselves beset on all Sides with Corporeal Objects, some of which are good for us, and others would hurt us) than to give us an exact Insight into the Nature of Things. And that probably there may be many more Channells of Knowledge than those we are furnished with, and such as would have given us farther Views into Things than we are capable of in our present Condition. And therefore we should with just the same Reason and Justice pronounce against the Possibility of any Thing which is not the Object of one of our Five Senses, as a Man that is born blind might declare against the Possibility of Light or Colours, because he has no Idea of them; or as we all should have done, had our whole Species come into the World with only Four of them, or without the Sense of Seeing.

IT is certain we can form no Idea of an Eternal Duration already past; and yet the *Atheist*, as well as we, is forced to acknowledge the Existence of Something from all Eternity. And his Want of an Idea of Eternity, is not sufficient, even in his own Opinion, to excuse him from believing it true. Let but immaterial Substance have the same fair Play, and we are in no Pain from this Objection against a GOD. For the very same Reason which obliges the *Atheist* to admit Something Eternal, tho' he has no Idea of Eternity; will equally hold in the Case of Immaterial Substance, if there are, as I shall afterwards prove † certain Appearances in the World which cannot be accounted for by the mere Mechanical Laws of Matter in Motion. For then he will have the same Motive for taking in some Being that is not a Material one, as he has for that of an Actual Eternity. For he takes Refuge in this, that he may avoid the Absurdity of Acknowledging, that any Thing can come into Being absolutely from Nothing, or without any Cause of its Being; and if he cannot make it very probable, that certain Powers I lately mentioned, may arise purely from Matter; he must then either acknowledge those Powers to have existed without any Cause or Reason of their Existence, or else with us he must admit Immaterial Substance.

THE other Argument against Immaterial Substance, *viz.* That there is nothing substantial in the World but Matter; is a shameful begging of the Question in Dispute, and taking for granted, what they know we constantly deny. For how would the *Atheist* prove this? Why thus *Spinoza* does it, he gives us a Definition of Substance, that " 'Tis something Independent of every Thing, and existing by a Necessity of Nature." From thence he infers, That since there can be but One Self-existent or Independent BEING, and Extension or Matter is confessed to be a substantial Being, therefore there can be no other Substance in the World besides Matter; and consequently, no such Thing

* Vide Serm. VI, VII, VIII, IX.

† Vide Sermon VII, VIII, IX, X.

Gurdon. as Immaterial Substance. But all this Proof amounts to no more than if he
 S E R M. had only told us, there is Nothing but Matter, therefore no Immaterial Being.

III. For he knows very well that we denied Matter to be the Self-existent Being; and therefore that if his Definition of Substance was a good one, that we should deny it belonged to Matter, or in this Sense of the Word, that Matter itself could be a Substantial Being, or indeed any Thing except the One Self-existent B E I N G: And then how will his Definition prove to us the impossibility of Immaterial Substance? Thus far then we can go in Defence of a G O D, That his Immateriality cannot be proved to be impossible, or to imply a Contradiction.

2dly, A N O T H E R Difficulty the *Atheist* is wont to raise against our Notion of a G O D, is, The Power that we ascribe to Him of making Something from Nothing. Here the *Atheist* is wont to triumph, as if we had found out a Power that could not possibly have any other Existence than in our own Imaginations: Here they persuade themselves, that they are supported by Authority as well as Reason. The *Atheist* does seldom take Refuge in Authority, but in this particular Case he condescends to part with his beloved Singularity, and is contented for once to be found in a Croud, and to take Shelter in Numbers. But he might as well have kept out of them for any Advantage they will be to his Cause. For he supposes the Meaning of this *Axiom*, *Nothing can be made out of Nothing*, to be designed by all those who made use of it, not only against the Production and Annihilation of any Species of Things; but also that there can be no other Productions but what are from pre-existent Matter; that every Thing must have a Material as well as an Efficient Cause of its Being. But here his Numbers forsake him, and he is reduced to those of his own Sect. For altho' it was generally believed before the Appearance of Christianity, That Matter was eternal and unmade, yet we are sure that all those, at least, who acknowledged our Souls to be incorporeal, did not derive them from pre-existent Matter: For thus *Plato* says *, "That if the Soul
 " be ancients than the Body, then must the Things of the Soul also be ancients
 " enter than those of the Body; and therefore Cogitation, and the several Species of it must be in the Order of Nature, not only before local Motion, but
 " also before the Longitude, Latitude and Profundity of Bodies." From whence 'tis evident, *Plato* could not possibly suppose the first Production of Souls to be derived from pre-existent Matter: Which is directly contrary to the Account which the *Atheist* gives of Things: For he must say, That the Things of the Soul, viz. Thought, &c. are posterior in the Order of Nature to the Formation of Things, being an Effect of Matter properly moved. And therefore supposing the Antients to have been unanimous in Denying the Production of any Substances ἐξ ἑκ ὀντων; yet since they did not derive all Beings from Matter, they will do the *Atheist's* Cause little Service; for if the *Atheist* will not allow their Authority, when they suppose that there must be some active Substance not derivable from Matter; neither are we obliged to allow it, when they suppose the Essences of all Things to be eternal.

BUT the *Atheist* may say, that their Agreement in denying a Power of producing Substances, will be of great Service to him, because a just Pursuit of that Principle must necessarily end in the Denial of a G O D, as the advancing of two Independent Principles, is a setting up two Gods, which is the same Thing with pulling down one.

AND therefore if they had seen the Impossibility of two Self-existent Principles, they must have joyn'd with the *Atheist*, in deriving all Things from that which every Body's Senses assure them to be a substantial Being, viz. Body or Matter.

TO this we answer, That all the Sects of Philosophy, excepting that of *Epicurus*, speak so fully their Sense as to the Necessity of some active Being distinct in its Original from Matter, in order to account for the Appearances

* Plato de Legib. Lib. X. pag. 896.

of Things, that we may with much better Reason conclude, that if they had *Gurdon* seen the Consequence of their Doctrine, they would rather have allowed of a *SERM.* *Creative*, than have given up to the *Atheist* an *Active* Power distinct from *III.* Matter.

As the *Stoick* is generally supposed to be the greatest *Materialist* of all the Sects, next to that of *Epicurus*, he will be the fittest Person to be interrogated upon this Occasion; and I think it cannot be difficult to shew, that if the *Stoick* argued consistently, he must have been more easily persuaded to admit a Power of Creating Matter, than to part with his Active Power or Principle; for so long as he supposed Matter or his *Materia prima* (which, according to him, was the Principle of all material Existences) to be a lazy and inactive Being, it would be impossible for him to give any Account of this Frame of Things, without an active Power to work upon the *Inertia* of Matter, or rouse it out of its Stupidity *.

AND therefore 'tis reasonable to believe, that had he been reduced to this Dilemma, of either admitting a Power of Creation, or rejecting an Active Principle, that he would have chosen the former, rather than have owned himself to be of a Sect of Philosophy that could give no Account concerning the Formation of Things. For it cannot be said, that the *Stoical* Active Principle might be a very volatile Matter, and what he called Matter, the grosser Part of it, to distinguish it from the former; because there is no other Difference between the finest and the grossest Matter, if Matter, as Matter, be inactive, than that the finest requires a less Force to put it into Motion: and then this Active Principle, instead of giving Motion to every Thing, must be moved itself by Something; and therefore could not be a Principle of Action, or account for the Formation of Things.

BUT however that be, if we consider the Reasons by which he and the rest of the Philosophers were determined in rejecting the Creative Power, they will appear to be so weak and inconclusive, that their Authority in this particular Point ought to have little Weight with us; they either argued from Natural Generations, or Artificial Productions. Because we do not now see Nature producing any Substances, but only different Modes of Being, therefore the Author of Nature never could: Because all Works of Art are only the Management of pre-existent Matter, and fitting it for particular Uses, therefore GOD, as well as every other Artist, must have a Subject prepared to his Hands to work upon. But this Way of Reasoning will never prove what ought to be proved, *viz.* That it is impossible in the Nature of the Thing, that there should be any such Power. For this Power of making Something out of Nothing, or of creating a Substance, is no more than the bringing Something into Being, which before had no manner of Existence; but this is not to affirm, That a Thing may be, and not to be at the same Time; which is a Contradiction, and therefore the Object of no Power whatsoever; but only that Something, which once had no Being at all, may be brought into Being. If we, who work only upon pre-existent Matter, cannot conceive how this should be done; this can be no good Argument against the Possibility of its being done by an Infinite Power; for there will always be something in such an Object as the Infinite BEING, that will more than fill our finite Capacities.

AND *Spinoza* himself confesses as much, when he tells us, † “ That he cannot understand the Manner how many Things are brought about by his Self-existent BEING, such as the Cohæſion of the Parts of Matter,

* Dicunt, ut scis, Stoici nostri duo esse in rerum Naturâ, ex quibus omnia fiant, Causum & materiam: Materia jacet iners, res ad omnia parata, cessatura, si nemo moveat. Causa autem, id est, Ratio materiam format, & quocunque vult versat, ex illâ varia opera producit. *Seneca* Epist. 65.

† Seriem rerum singularium mutabilium impossibile foret humanæ imbecillitati assequi, cum propter earum omnem numerum superantem multitudinem, tum propter infinitas circumstantias, in unâ & eadem re, quarum unaquæque potest esse causa ut res existat aut non existat. *Traët. de Emend. Intellect.* p. 388.

Cognoscere quomodo partes naturæ revera cohæreant, & quomodo unaquæque pars cum suo toto conveniat, id me ignorare dixi in antecedenti meâ Epistolâ, quia ad hoc cognoscendum requiretur totâ naturam omnesque ejus partes cognoscere. p. 439.

Gurdon. "and the Connexion which particular Beings have with each other. And
SERM. "yet he is fully persuaded, that there is a Chain and Connexion of particular

III. "Beings; that there is such a Thing as the Cohæſion of the Parts of the Bo-
dy, and an Union of all the Parts with the whole." And therefore in Pur-
ſuance of the ſame Way of Reasoning, Altho' we cannot tell how GOD could
make all Things out of Nothing, our Ignorance will never prove the Thing
to be impoſſible, no more than *Spinoſa's* Ignorance of the Cauſe of Cohæſion
in the Parts of Matter, will prove that there can be no ſuch Thing.

THE Neceſſity of admitting a Creative Power, will appear ſtill ſtronger,
when we come to ſhew the Abſurdities which the *Materialiſt* for Want of ſuch a
Power is reduced to. But

3dly, ANOTHER Impoſſibility the *Atheiſt* is wont to charge upon our No-
tion of a GOD, is on account of our aſcribing Goodneſs to Him, which
they ſay, is plainly contradicted by the many Marks and Tokens of Natural
and Moral Evil which appear in that Part of his Workmanſhip which we
are beſt acquainted with. Before the *Atheiſt* can prove that theſe could not
poſſibly proceed from a Good BEING, it will be incumbent on him to ſhew,
That 'tis inconfiſtent with the Nature of Goodneſs to make Beings with diffe-
rent Degrees of Perfection. If he cannot do that, then certainly every De-
gree of Imperfection makes an Abatement of the Happineſs of the Creature;
and ſuch an Abatement conſtitutes what we call Natural or Physical Evil.
Thus for Inſtance, 'Tis an Imperfection in us Men that we want a perfect
Knowledge of our own Frame and Conſtitution; ſuch a Knowledge, I mean,
as would enable us to find out (antecedently to the tedious Way of Trial and
Experience) what would be good for us, and what would be prejudicial or hurt-
ful to us. To ſupply the Want of this Knowledge, GOD has affixed the Idea
of Pain to our Natures, which is deſigned to give us Warning of any Thing
that might hurt us. Pain is acknowledged to be a real Evil, and yet if we
were not admoniſhed by 'it to avoid ſuch Things as would be hurtful to us,
what thro' Inadvertence and Ignorance of our own Frame, we ſhould never
know when it was out of Order, nor endeavour to ſet it aright, till it was too
late. If therefore it be not repugnant to the Idea of Goodneſs to create a Be-
ing with ſuch a limited Knowledge, neither could it be inconfiſtent with the
ſame Goodneſs to make him capable of receiving painful Ideas, when ſuch a
Conſtitution was fitted for the Uſe and Benefit of ſuch a Creature.

AND thus for Moral Evil, the *Atheiſt* can never ſhew its Exiſtence to be
a Contradiction to the Idea of Goodneſs, till he can fully ſatisfy us, that there
can be no ſuch thing as a Creature endued with a Power over its own Actions;
becauſe if that is poſſible, which the *Atheiſt* cannot diſprove, ſuch a Creature
may moſt certainly make an ill Uſe of that Power, and involve itſelf in Moral
Evil.

BUT I ſhall decline ſaying any more upon this Head of Natural and Mo-
ral Evil, becauſe this Subject has been already Handled by the Learned Perſon
who lately Preached theſe Lectures; to whom the Reader is referred for farther
Satisfaction.

S E R M O N IV.

I THES. v. 21.

Prove all Things: hold fast that which is good.

HAVING in the preceeding Discourse shewn that the *Atheist* cannot prove a Contradiction upon our Notion of a God; and yet sure if there was a *real* Contradiction in it, he might help others to a Sight of it as well as himself; I proceed to consider the Difficulties attending his Scheme, by which he will appear to be a very partial Enquirer after Truth, as he might have seen much greater Difficulties in his Material Scheme, than those which he makes Objections against the Religious one; that under the Colour of avoiding the three Difficulties of an Immaterial, Omnipotent, and Good God, he is forced to take Refuge in such Explanations of Things as are evidently false and impossible; and is therefore inexcusable in making those Difficulties a Pretence for rejecting Religion.

SPINOSA is the only Person among the modern *Atheists*, that has pretended to give us a regular Scheme of *Atheism*; and therefore I cannot act unfairly in making him the Representative of their Party, and in proving the Weakness and Absurdities of the Atheistick Scheme, by shewing the Faults of his: tho' I shall not so entirely confine myself to the Examination of his Scheme, as not to shew occasionally, that every other Scheme that leaves out the Religious Notion of a God, will be liable to great Absurdities. And if we examine the Hypothesis which *Spinoza* has substituted as a Remedy to the above-mentioned Difficulties, I am fully persuaded his Remedy will appear to all indifferent Persons to be much worse than the Disease he complains of.

HE supposes with us, "That something must have existed from all Eternity, without having any other Cause for its Existence than the absolute Necessity of its own Nature:" Thus far we are agreed. He further supposes, "That there is nothing in Nature, that is, no Substance or *real* Being, besides this one Necessarily Existent Being; and since the Existence of Material Substance is most evident, that this must be the One Self-existent BEING, and all the variety of Beings in the World, nothing but different Modifications of this One Material-Substance. He supposes this Substance to be Infinite or Immense, and to have an infinite Number of Attributes, two of which he supposes to be Thought and Extension; he then affirms in Consequence of this, That all Bodies are Modifications of this One Substance, considered as *extended*; as all Souls or thinking Beings are the Modifications of this One Substance considered under the Notion of *Thought*. So that God, the Necessarily Existent BEING, and endued with infinite Perfections, is the Cause of all Things that exist, tho' at the same time He himself differs not really from those Things that exist; they being all of them Consubstantial with him, and not so much as personally differing from Him. He is at the same time Agent and Patient, Cause and Effect, and every Thing He produces, is only practising upon *Himself*; and generating a new Appearance of *Himself*."

THIS

Gurdon. THIS is the extraordinary Scheme that *Spinoza* has thought fit to erect, in order to get himself clear of the Three above-mentioned Difficulties. From this Account of his System 'tis evident, that tho' *Spinoza* and we do differ as to the Subject of Self-existent Nature; yet, as to certain Characters or Properties of it, we are both agreed; such as,

S E R M.
IV.

1st, THE Unity or Simplicity of the Self-existent BEING. And 2^{dly}, Its Immutability. For whatever Diversity, whatever Changes there may seem to be in the Nature of Things, yet all this does seem to pass with him for nothing; so long as 'tis but one and the same Numerical BEING appearing in different Dresses: As a Man suffers no real Change by assuming different Characters, or by personating any State or Condition of Life different from his own: Which he thinks sufficient to secure both the Unity and Immutability of his Self-existent BEING. Thus far then being agreed, we are to enquire, How far he has mended the Religious Scheme by rejecting Immaterial Substance; and whether his Material Scheme can possibly answer the above-mentioned Characters.

THE insuperable Difficulties which thinking Men found in reconciling these Attributes with material Extension, inclin'd them to admit, altho' their Senses could give them no Information concerning the Existence of any such BEING, that there might be in Nature some more perfect Manner of Existence than the Material one; and this they called Immaterial Substance. *Spinoza* himself was well aware of the Difficulties that would disturb his Material Scheme, and therefore found it necessary to give us a new Notion of Matter, and different from what the World had hitherto suspected of it. Matter had always been thought capable of Division into numberless Parts; each of which Parts might exist separately from the whole; and consequently, if Matter was the Self-existent Being, according to the common Notion the World had of it, there must have been as many Self-existent Beings as there are Parts into which Matter is divisible. But *Spinoza* was sensible that the BEING which was Necessarily Existent, could be but One; he therefore lays it down as the Foundation of his Undertaking, "That there is no more than One Material Substance in the World; that what every Body before him had call'd distinct Substances, were to be no longer such." And tho' the several Parts of Matter are every Day seen to be separated from each other without losing their Existence, as when the Parts of Wood are divided from each other into Smoke and Ashes; and tho' the separate Existence of Individuals, and of the several Concretions of Matter look never so much like distinct Substances; yet they shall all pass with *Spinoza* for nothing more than different Modes of one and the same Being.

BUT if we know any thing at all, we know this to be false and impossible: if we have any distinct Ideas, and if such distinct Ideas will at all prove a real Distinction or Difference in Things existing without us, we are as certain as we can be of any Thing, that there must be more than one Material Substance; as many as there are or can be of separate, material Existences, and those as many as the Divisions which Matter is capable of receiving. And therefore *Spinoza* by substituting Matter in the Room of Immaterial Substance, has avoided a Difficulty, and taken up with an Impossibility. For let there be never so much Difficulty in conceiving Immaterial Substance, yet when we find ourselves reduced to this Dilemma, of either admitting it for true, or else acknowledging Matter to be a Simple Being, the Choice which Side to take, cannot be long in making: For all that any one can say against Immaterial Substance, is only this; That his Senses give him no Account of any such Existences; but as for Matter or the Material World, he sees nothing plainer than that this is a Compound Being, each of whose Parts may exist separately; and therefore can never be made consistent with that Unity and Simplicity which are necessary Consequences of that Oneness of Substance which *Spinoza* ascribes to the Necessarily Existing BEING. The only Subterfuge *Spinoza* has, and a mere Subterfuge it is, is this; That he takes it for granted, there is no such Thing as a Vacuum; and therefore

therefore that there can be no real Separation of one Part of Matter from another. Gurdon-
IV.

IN the first place, This is taking for granted, and Building his whole Scheme upon what Sir *Iſaac Newton*, a much better Philoſopher than himſelf, has ſince his Time given the World ſtrong Reaſons for believing to be falſe, viz. *That there are no Spaces void of Matter*. But ſuppoſing there is no ſuch Thing as a *Vacuum*; yet thoſe who maintain'd the Infinity of Matter, or that all Space was filled with Matter, did acknowledge, that the Parts of Matter were really diviſible and ſeparable from each other; and conſequently did not think void Spaces neceſſary in making a Separation of one particular Part of Matter from another, however neceſſary they might be to make a total Separation from all Matter in general: For who will not ſay, that two Perſons are as really ſeparated from one another, tho' the Space or Diſtance that ſeparates them ſhould be filled with other Perſons, as if it were taken up by any Thing elſe? and therefore one Part of Matter may be really divided from another, altho' the Space between thoſe two Parts of Matter ſhould be filled up by other Matter.

INDEED, *Spinoſa* himſelf ſeems to miſtruſt the Strength of this Argument, and therefore thinks it beſt to provide himſelf a Retreat in caſe he were beaten-out of it, by ſaying, That he does not know whether he attributes any thing to GOD, that is unworthy of him, if he ſhould grant that He was diviſible*. And all the Reaſon he gives why Diviſibility ſhould not be an Imperfection in GOD, is, "Becauſe if He is diviſible, He is divided by *Himſelf*, and not by any External Cauſe." But this Answer leaves the Difficulty in all its Strength: For let the Difficulty be cauſed by what it will, ſtill the Difficulty remains, how a partable and ſeparable Nature, can be a Simple or Uncompounded BEING. Till the *Materialiſt* can ſatisfy us in that Point, we muſt beg Leave to affirm, That he is no fair Examiner; that he could not be determined by the greater Evidence, when he left Religion to free himſelf from the Belief of Immaterial Subſtance, becauſe at the ſame time he ſaw himſelf under a Neceſſity of ſwallowing an Article of Belief of much harder Diſteſtion; I mean, that Diviſibility is irreconcilable with Unity.

2dly, ANOTHER remarkable Difficulty the *Atheiſt* brings upon himſelf, is To make a ſufficient Provision for the Immutability of his Self-exiſtent BEING, while he makes Matter to be the Subject of it. We are fully perſuaded that we know the Difference between a Being that always continues the ſame, and a Being that is perpetually changing the Manner of its Exiſtence; that a Being who is what it is by a Neceſſity of Nature, cannot be ſubject to Change or Corruption: we are alſo well aſſured that Material Beings are ſo far from being without Variation or *Shadow of Turning*, that they are ſubject to all manner of Alterations, that they are ſucceſſively putting on new Modes of Being, acquiring ſome Forms that they had not before, and loſing others that they had.

How much ſoever our modern *Atheiſt* may think fit to laugh at the *Epicureans*, yet I think, in this Reſpect, they have taken better Care of their Gods than he has done. The *Epicureans* ſaw that their Material Gods could never be permanent Beings, if they were in the Way of their Atoms; that their Frame would be in continual Danger of being diſordered, if not deſtroyed by their continual Incurſions: and therefore they wiſely removed them out of their numberleſs Worlds, where the Atoms were continually joltling each other, and placed them in Security in their Intramundan Spaces: But our modern *Atheiſt* has taken no ſuch Care of his God, for he has left him in all the Hurry and Confuſion of Things, continually altering and changing his State and Condition, ſometimes for the better, ſometimes for the worſe; he is the Subject of all the Generations, and all the Corruptions that are ſeen in the World. For, as what others would call particular Beings or Subſtances, are with *Spinoſa* only Modes of the ſame One Subſtance GOD; ſo it muſt be GOD that is the

* Se neſcire cur divinâ Naturâ indigna eſſet, ſi dicatur Diviſibilis. in the latter End of the Scholion on Prop. 15. Part I.

Gurdon. Subject of all the Changes ; and yet *Cotta* in *Tully de Natura Deorum*, speaks
 S E R M. of it as an undoubted *Axiom* in *Philosophy*, *Si ortus est Deorum, interitus sit ne-*
 IV. *cesse est*, p. 56.

~ MUTABILITY has so plain a Mark of Imperfection upon it, and is so inconsistent with necessary Existence, that it gives *Spinoza* no small Trouble to clear his Necessary Being from any such Imputation ; and the only Way he could think of, was this : That tho' the Manner of Being was always changing, yet the Substance or Subject of those Changes always continued the same. But this Plea will never excuse his Self-existent Being from Variableness and Change, whenever we appeal to any of the Ancients who have made use of these Words: For they all maintained, as much as *Spinoza*, the Immutability of the Substance of Body ; they supposed that the Substance of Matter was never created or annihilated, but always continued the same ; and yet believed it a BEING that was ἀλλοίωσις & τεπιδος, because of its so often altering the Manner of its Existence.

THE *Proteus* of the Ancients, tho' the Emblem of the greatest Inconstancy, would be as immutable a God, with all the different Forms he threw himself into, as *Spinoza's* Self-existent Being. For 'twas always the self-same Being, tho' sometimes in one Shape, sometimes in another. And therefore to deny the Mutability of any Being merely because the Substance remains the same, is to give a new Signification to the Word, and different from what was ever given before. For in every Mutable Being 'twas always understood, that the Substance remained what it was, only the Mode of its Existence was altered; otherwise there would be no Difference between the Change and the Annihilation of a Being; and yet the Poets as well as Philosophers, the fabulous *Metamorphoses* of *Ovid*, as well as the real Changes and Corruptions, as explained by the Philosophers, have always supposed a Difference between these two Ideas. And therefore *Spinoza's* Argument will only prove the Immortality, not the Immutability of his Self-existent Being.

'Tis plain from *Plutarch*, That he thought a Being might be immortal, and yet an imperfect and mutable Being: For thus he expresses himself in his Treatise against the *Stoicks*, where he is ridiculing the Stoical Notion of *Jupiter*, into whom the *Stoicks* supposed all other Beings, Gods as well as Men, to be transformed at the Conflagration; "*Chrysippus*, says he, and *Cleanthes*, " when they had filled the whole World with what they called Gods, " they took no Care of securing any of them from Corruption but *Jupiter* " only, in whom all the rest of the Gods were lost." And then he makes this Remark, " That his destroying of them, was no better a Proof of his own " Immutability than it was of theirs. For, says he, it is no more an Argument of Weakness and Mutability in the Gods, that they are changed and corrupted into *Jupiter*, than it is in *Jupiter* into whom they are changed*."

BESIDES, this Argument of the *Spinolists* cannot be a good one, because it would prove too much: for it would prove only that the Self-existent BEING was not a Mutable BEING, but also that there could be no such Thing as a Mutable Being in the World. For if the Self-existent BEING could be an Immutable one amidst all the Changes He went thro', only because his Substance was not destroyed but remained the same; then what should hinder Man from being an Immutable Being, altho' he should change his Opinions Inclinations and Purposes every Day, or, if you will, every Hour of the Day? for amidst all these Changes, he is still the same Person or personal Being. And therefore by the Reasoning of the *Spinolists*, he too would be a most steady Being, tho' his Thoughts and Purposes were unsteady enough.

* *Plutarch.* Περὶ τῶν κοινῶν ἐνοιῶν πρὸς τὴν Στωϊκὴν. — Sect. 1000.
 Χρυσίππῳ καὶ Κλεάνθῳ ἐμπεπληκότες — τὰ λόγια θεῶν τὸν ἕρανόν — ὅτι τῶν ποσέων ἀφάρτων ἐπὶ αἰδίων ἀπολεῖται πασι, πλην μόνου τοῦ Διὸς εἰς ὃν πάντας καταναλίσκοντες τὰς ἄλλας, ὥστε καὶ τὰ τῶν φθειρῶν προσεῖναι τῷ φθειρῶν μὴ ἐπικίερον. ἀδυνατεῖ γὰρ τοῦ καὶ τὰ μεταβάλλει εἰς ἕτερον φθίρεται, καὶ τὸ τοῖς ἄλλοις εἰς αὐτὸ — φθειρομένοις τρεφόμενοι σῴζονται.

THESE Difficulties, or rather Impossibilities, must affect every Scheme *Gurdon*. that the *Atbeist* can raise upon the Foot of a Material God. And now I ^{SERM.} will leave it with every Thoughtful Person, whether the *Atbeist* could be ^{IV.} moved by any rational Conviction, when he took Refuge in the Material Hypothesis, to avoid the Difficulty of conceiving an Immaterial Existence; and whether he has not acted the same foolish Part, which *Cotta* charged upon *Epicurus* in another Case *. But,

2dly, I AM now to consider how he has mended the Matter by rejecting a Power of making Something from Nothing. As he allows no such Power, he is under a Necessity of deriving all the Powers of Nature from the Substance of Matter, as from an *Emanative* Cause, producing them by acting upon itself; and thus Thought, Sense, and Life, as well as Material Extension, must all be drawn out of the Bowels of this simple Substance of Matter.

As there are evidently Thinking, as well as Unthinking Beings in the World; the Difficulty is, how to derive both of them from one single Principle. *Spinoza* and we are agreed, That there is but One Principle of all Things: we account for it, by supposing an Omnipotent, Substantial Intelligence to have given Being to Matter, not as an *Emanative* Cause, by producing it out of its own Substance; for we do not see how material Extension should flow from the Substance of a Thoughtful Being, any more than how Thought should arise from Matter; but that GOD gave a Being to Matter from *Nothing*, or when it had no manner of Existence previously to the Exercise of this Power of his.

THE *Atbeist*, that he may avoid ascribing this Power of producing Substances, or of making something from Nothing, which he thinks to be the Object of no Power whatever, is forced to have recourse to Material Substance as the only Source from whence must arise both Thought and Extension, all the Variety of Corporeal Beings, all their Powers and Qualities, and also all the Powers of Mind, such as those of Perception and Intelligence. A hard Task this is for him to perform; and yet hard as it is, he must go thro' with it, if he will not with us admit a Power of Creation.

WE agree to what the Author of the *Characteristicks* has said concerning the Production of either of these Substances, (to wit, Extended and Thinking) out of the other, when he says, †, "That the poor Dregs of sorry Matter, can no more be made out of the simple, pure Substance of immaterial Thought, than the high Spirits of Thought or Reason can be extracted from the gross Substance of heavy Matter." We joyn, I say, with him in this Reasoning, and do therefore assert the Necessity of having Recourse to a Creative Power; for since neither Material Substance can flow from Immaterial, nor Immaterial Thinking Substance from Material in the Way of *Emanation*; there must either be two Independent Principles from whence we may draw out these two different Kinds of Being; or else one of them must necessarily be produced from Nothing. If the *Atbeist* will affirm, That Thought and Extension may arise from the same Substance; the Absurdities he will be reduced to, are these; he must say, That *Sense* and *Insensibility* are the Attributes of the same Simple Substance of GOD; and yet he nor no Man alive can tell how such incompatible Attributes could be identified, so as to constitute one Simple Substance; that is, how the same simple Substance could be both sensible and insensible, thoughtful and thoughtless.

To avoid this Absurdity, he must then say, That there is no real Difference between Thought and Extension: he must fall in with that absurd Notion of Mr. *Hobbs*, "That all Matter, is furnished with actual Sensation and Thought; altho' only Matter Organized and in Life, can make Evidence of its Perceptions." And *Spinoza* seems to be under a Necessity of acknowledging this; because he makes Thought and Extension to be Two Attributes of his One

* Graviorem plagam recipiebat, ut leviolem repelleret, p. 58. de Nat. Deorum. *Davies's* Edit.

† Vol. II. p. 296, 297.

Gurdon. Substance, and says, "That there is no real Difference between the Attributes and the Substance." For if there be no real Difference between the Attributes and the Substance, there can be none between the Attributes themselves, to wit, between Thought and Extension, according to that known Rule, That those Things which agree in a third, must agree among themselves.

Thus we see *Spinoza* in avoiding the Difficulty of conceiving Something made out of Nothing, reduced to the Necessity of making no real Difference between Thought and material Extension, tho' every Body else sees a manifest Difference between them. Whatever Difficulty then there may be in conceiving it possible that Something should be made from Nothing; yet I hope there is a great deal of Difference between our *not conceiving* the Possibility of a Thing, and the *conceiving* it impossible to be: That Thought and Extension should be really the same Thing, we see, if we see any thing, to be impossible; because our Ideas of them, are evidently the Ideas of different Things *, and we must despair of ever knowing that one Thing is not another, if such Marks of Distinction in our Ideas will not prove a Difference in the Things themselves.

2dly, THERE is another Absurdity which *Spinoza* is led into by rejecting the Creative Power, which is this: He must make his Self-existent Being the Subject of all the contradictory Inclinations and Passions which are met with in Mankind; for if there be no Creative Power, there will be no other Way in accounting for the Existence of Things, but by deriving them from the Substance of the Self-existent BEING: But also such Derivations can be nothing but so many different Modes, as himself confesses, of the Divine Substance; and consequently, the Souls of Men, all their Thoughts and Passions, will be only different Modes of the Divine BEING, And therefore it will be GOD, and not the Man (for he is only a Mode of the Divine BEING) that thinks, affirms or denies, loves or hates, so often as Man seems to do either. For it is an undisputed *Axiom* in *Philosophy*, That whenever we affirm of any Thing, That it is an Agent or a Patient, we mean that the Substance, and not the Accidents, does or suffers this or that; as when we say, Iron is hard, or Wax soft; we mean not to say, that the Accident of Hardness is hard, or of Softness is soft, for this would be ridiculous; but that the Substance or Essence which constitutes these Bodies is hard or soft: so when we say that a Man thinks of any Thing, affirms or denies, loves or hates any Thing: we do not mean, that the Thoughts themselves (which are only Accidents or Modes of the Soul) but the Man himself or his Soul thinks, affirms or denies, loves or hates. From thence it must follow, that the Souls of Men, being according to *Spinoza's* Scheme, Modifications of the Divine Substance, we must not (if we would speak properly) say; that the Man affirms or denies, loves or hates; but that GOD loves or hates, affirms or denies, as often as Men do so: And as one Man at the same Time, and in the same Respects, affirms what another denies, and loves what another hates. According to this Account of Things, GOD must at the same Time, and in the same Respect affirm, and not affirm or deny, love, and not love or hate, which are palpable Contradictions; and if we know any thing at all, cannot possibly belong to any Being. Yet these, or as great Absurdities will stick fast to all the Deniers of Creative Power.

FOR they must either affirm, with *Spinoza*, That all the several Beings in the World are only Modes of the Necessarily-existent BEING, which must end in the Absurdity I have now mentioned, of making all the contradictory Volitions and Passions of Men to be the Affections of one and the same Being; Or if they affirm these Modes of *Spinoza* to be real and substantial Beings; they must admit what is equally absurd, an infinite Number of Necessarily-existent Beings, as many as there are real Beings in the World: Or else they must with us, allow, how difficult soever it may be to conceive, that there must be somewhere or other a Power of making Substances or real Beings, which

* Vide Serm. VIII.

is the same thing with what we call the Creative Power. For nothing can be plainer, than that all particular Beings (supposing them to be real or substantial Beings) must exist by a Necessity of Nature, if there be no such Thing in the World as a Power of making real Existences. Gurdon.
SERM.
IV.

SPINOSA was well aware of this Consequence, and therefore as he was neither willing to admit a Power of Creation, nor a Plurality of Necessarily-existent Beings, he could see no other Way of extricating himself out of this Difficulty, but by advancing this new Notion, "That what the World had before him called real Beings, was nothing more than different Modes of Being." And tho' Mr. Bayle seems to think the *Chinese* Notion, which makes all particular Souls to be so many Self-existent Beings, or *Democritus* and *Epicurus's* infinite Number of Self-existent Atoms, to be a more rational Account of Things, than that which makes all particular Beings to be only Modes of Being; yet thus far I think sufficiently clear, That the *Atheist* acts a most foolish Part when he takes Refuge in either of these, to excuse himself from admitting a Power of Creation.

FOR as to a Plurality of Self-existent Beings, nothing can be more absurd than to make all the Diversity of Beings, with different Degrees of Power, to be all Necessarily-existent. The Reason which induced the *Chinese* to suppose a great Number of Self-existent Souls with different Powers, was, That they might the better account for their animating different and unequal Portions of Matter; and the Reason why the *Epicureans* supposed their Self-existent Atoms to be of different Figures, was, That they might give a more probable Account of the different Combinations of Material Beings. But if this Inequality of Souls, and the Different Figures of Atoms, was really necessary in accounting for the Diversity of Beings in the World, it will be necessary to look farther, and enquire for the Cause of this Difference in the *Chinese* and *Epicurean* Principles: For if the Inequality in the several Portions of Matter, was a good Reason for supposing an Inequality in the Self-existent Principles, what Reason can they give why we should not as well look out for the Cause of the Inequality of their Principles, as well as they provide a Cause of the different and unequal Combinations of Bodies? They could, I say, have no more Reason for supposing the Difference of their Principles to have arisen from the Necessity of their Natures, than that the different Combinations of Matter, should have arisen from such a Necessity; which latter they do not suppose. And therefore, if they would argue consistently with themselves, they must acknowledge some external Cause of the Difference that is supposed to be in their Principles; and this Cause must be some One *Simple* BEING, not many Beings; because all Diversity of Being does plainly suppose a Reason of its being what it is, extrinsic to the Nature of the Being, to wit, that it must have some external Cause, that makes it to be what it is, or different from any Thing else.

AND thus I have shewn that the *Atheist* does not act like a fair Examiner, when he rejects a GOD with a Power of Creation; because he either takes up with a Number of Self-existent Beings of unequal Forces, or else, with *Spinoza*, he makes the Self-existent BEING to be every Thing, in the strictest and properest Sense of the Words; which are such Absurdities, that we may without Breach of Charity, deny such Persons to be impartial Searchers after Truth.

S E R M O N V.

I T H E S. V. 21.

Prove all Things : hold fast that which is good.

Gurdon.
SERM.
V.
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I HAVE already shewn that the *Atheist* cannot be a fair Examiner, when he quits Religion for the avoiding some Difficulties in the Religious Scheme; because he must swallow much greater, if he will account for the Appearances of Things, and abide by his Material one. As to two of the Difficulties which he is wont to complain of, *viz.* The Immateriality of GOD, and his Power of Creation, or of making Something from Nothing, we have already seen, that if he will not admit these, he must admit some Things that are much harder of Belief, and that therefore he cannot be justified by any fair and candid Reasoner in rejecting Religion, for the Sake of these Difficulties.

I AM now to consider one other Difficulty, which he makes in Excuse for not believing a GOD, which is, That it would oblige him to believe that Evil may be reconciled with the supposal of a Good BEING; and am to shew, That all the Ways he can possibly take to account for the real State of Good and Evil upon the Foot of *Atheism*, are impossible to be true; and therefore that he is an unfair Examiner in rejecting Religion for the Sake of this Difficulty. I will begin with that Account *Spinoza* is able to give of this *Phænomenon*, consistently with his System of the World, which is built upon a single Principle, from whence he is to draw both Good and Evil.

IF there was in the World nothing but Natural and Moral Good, or nothing but Natural and Moral Evil, there would be no Difficulty in deriving either of them from one single Principle; but as there is an evident Mixture of both in the World, *Spinoza* judg'd it to be impossible that such a Mixture should arise from a good Principle, and therefore erects a new System with a Material God at the Head of it, that should be neither Good nor Evil, but in its own Nature indifferent to both: Such a being then acting necessarily according to its Nature, which Nature is supposed be perfectly indifferent as to Good and Evil, an acting by an infinite Force or Power, must produce all the Possibilities of Being. For *Spinoza* says *, *Ex Necessitate Divinae Naturæ infinita infinitis modis, hoc est, omnia quæ sub intellectum infinitum cadere possunt, sequi debent.* And therefore since Errors and Crimes, Grief and Pain, are as real Modifications of Being, as Truth and Virtue, Pleasure and Happiness; consequently one as well as the other must have a Place in the Universe. For this Principle being in its own Nature indifferent to either what we call Good or Evil, and producing all that is possible to be produced, it must of course produce Evil as well as Good.

WE will now see whether 'twas worth *Spinoza*'s while to quit Religion in order to get rid of that difficult Question, If a Good GOD, *πότεν τὰ κακά.* I would grant *Spinoza*, that his infinite BEING should produce all the possibilities of Being; but then I can never grant, that Contradictions are Pos-

* Prop. XVI.

ibilities of Being. And yet surely it looks as much like a Contradiction as can *Gurdon*.
be, to draw out of the same Simple, Uncompounded Substance both Wisdom *S E R M.*
and Folly, Virtue and Vice, Happiness and Misery; and yet if this Account *V.*
could be true, these must all flow from the Essence of the Self-existent BEING.

HOMER has shewn much better Sense, when he accounted for the Goods and Evils of this Life by placing two Tuns near the Throne of *Jupiter*, one filled with good Things, the other with Evils, and that Goods and Evils came from Heaven, as *Jupiter* poured out of either of them; if he poured out of both at the same Time, then there was upon Earth an Appearance of both Good and Evil, or a Mixture of both. He saw that if he had made both Happiness and Misery to be drawn out of the same Vessel, that it would have had too much of the Air of Incredible, even for a Poem; that it would have been as bad as if he should have pretended to fetch both *salt Water and Fresh* from the same Spring or Fountain, which was in St. *James's* Time a proverbial Saying by which they used to express an Impossibility. Had *Spinoza* lived in those Days, and broached this Doctrine, his God might have been in Danger of becoming a proverbial Expression for any Thing that was thought impossible. For to suppose a Simple Being to be neither Good nor Bad, but a Mixture of both, is supposing what is altogether unintelligible. The *Spinozist* must allow a *real* Difference between Physical Good and Physical Evil, Pleasure and Pain, Happiness and Misery: And yet if his Account of Things were true, these must be so like one another, and so much of the same Nature, as to come indifferently from the same Uncompounded Substance.

BUT this is not all, here is not only a Difficulty of giving Birth to both Good and Evil from such a single Principle, but also when that is done, of freeing such a Principle from the Contradiction of being at the same Time happy and miserable, in Joy and in Grief: as often as Men or any other Beings are in these Circumstances, which is always the Case of some or other of them. *Tully* * ridicules a Notion of *Pythagoras*, which made the Souls of Men to be Parts of the Divine BEING; because GOD must in such Case be often miserable; but this was not to be reconcil'd with his supposed Happiness. *Nam Pythagoras qui censuit Deum animum esse per Naturam rerum omnem intentum & comitantem, ex quo nostri animi carperentur, non vidit distractione humanorum animorum discerpi & dilacerari Deum: & cum miseri essent animi, quod plerisque contingeret, tum Dei partem esse miseram.* We see that it was then thought a good Argument against *Pythagoras's* Opinion, That if it were true, the DEITY must be miserable, which could not be, because GOD was a Happy BEING, and they little thought that 'twas possible to be both happy and miserable at the same Time; and therefore *Pythagoras's* Notion was justly rejected, and so must *Spinoza's* too for the same Reason; for if *Pythagoras* made the Souls of Men to be Parts of the Divine BEING, *Spinoza* makes them to be Modes of the same BEING, or the same Nature of GOD, differing only in the Manner of its Existence; and therefore the Divine BEING must be at least equally affected in the one as in the other Case.

THE Religious Man stands clear of any such Absurdities; as he supposes these particular Existences which are the Subjects of Evil, to be made not out of the Divine Substance, but from *Nothing*, and to be created with different Degrees of Perfection, and consequently, that the Evils they are obnoxious to, whether Physical or Moral, do not proceed from Him, but are, as I before observed, merely the Effects of their imperfect Natures. And we do not think that the *Atheist* can prove it inconsistent with Goodness to make limited or imperfect Natures. Thus far we are sure we can talk Sense. Whereas *Spinoza* having no Creatures nor limited Natures to take Refuge in, must necessarily suppose all the Evils and Imperfections of the World to be the Attributes of his Infinite BEING: And therefore cannot avoid the Absurdities I have now charged upon him.

* Tull. De Natura Deorum.

Gurdon. THERE is also one other Absurdity chargeable upon *Spinoza's* System, *viz.* That all the foolish and wicked Thoughts of Men, as well as those that are good and rational, must be the Thoughts of his Self-existent BEING; but so long as we see a real Difference between good Sense and Foolishness, Virtue and Vice, we can never see how such incompatible Properties can flow from the same Principle. For this would be to make a most Simple Being to be not only a Compound Being, which is Contradiction enough; but also compounded of such inconsistent Ingredients as could never be united together in the same Being, but would battle each other till one of them had subdued and destroyed the other.

BUT then, it may be said, Why may not this be true, as well as what the Christian Religion supposes to be true, *viz.* That the same Person may be the Subject of both human and divine Attributes? For human Wisdom, or the Wisdom which human Nature, for Instance, is capable of, when compared with divine Wisdom, is no better than Folly: And if this be true, then the Subject of both Natures must be at the same Time divinely and humanly wise, that is, wise, and not wise; but this can no more be conceived than the other; and if these Things can be supposed by the Religious Man to exist in God, why not by the *Spinozist* in his Self-existent Being. Some Christians to avoid this Difficulty of uniting God and Man in the Person of our SAVIOUR, either supposed one of the Natures to be swallowed up, lost or confounded in the other, *viz.* the Man in God; or else, that after the Union there still continued two distinct Subjects of the two different Natures; but there is no Need of either of these Solutions to clear the Union of God with Man from the Objections I have raised against *Spinoza's* Self-existent Being. For when God took upon him human Nature, that human Nature was perfectly submitted to the Divine, and constantly followed its Guidance, and the Actions of the Person were always the last Determinations, not of the Passions and Appetites of the Man, but of the Divine *Logos*. No contrary Volitions, no Conflict between God and Man, but the Word directed, and the Man followed. And tho' our SAVIOUR, as a Man, is said to have encreased in Wisdom as well as Stature; yet it is enough for my present Purpose, that there was no Clashing between the Wisdom of the Divine and Human Nature: If the Wisdom of the latter was less extensive, yet it was without any Mixture of Folly: Whereas I objected against *Spinoza's* System, because it introduced a Nature which was a perfect Scene of Contention and Inconsistency, as it was evident from the many *rational* and *foolish* Thoughts of Men; which if we know what Contradictions are, must be such, whenever they are both made to be at the same Time the Thoughts of one and the same Being. And yet (as I have already shewn) his Self-existent Being, so long as he supposes him the only Substance or real BEING in the World, and all other Beings only the same Being in different Shapes and Dresses, according to the Diversity and Variety that we see in Nature, must be chargeable with all the foolish as well as rational Thoughts of Men*.

HAVING now shewn that *Spinoza's* Hypothesis is so far from giving a better Account of that Mixture of Good and Evil which appears in the World, than the Religious Scheme, that it will by no means introduce any such Mixture into the World; and therefore that every *Spinozist* is Culpable when he rejects Religion for the Difficulty of reconciling Good and Evil with a Good God:

I COME now to shew, That no other Atheistick Scheme ought to be taken up by any fair and impartial Examiner; because every other Atheistick Scheme, different from that of *Spinoza*, will suppose more than One Necessarily-existent Principle; but a Plurality of Self-existent Beings cannot possibly be true. And therefore how well soever a Plurality of Principles would account for this particular Difficulty, yet it ought not to be admitted for a Solution of it; because every good System ought to be built upon clear and evident Principles of Reason, as well as to be qualified for solving Appearances of Things: But every

* Vide Serm. IV.

Scheme that supposes a Plurality of Independent, Necessarily-existent Beings, *Gurdon* is so far from being supported by clear, evident Principles of Reason, that 'tis S E R M. V. directly repugnant to the clearest Ideas we have of the Order of Things. All the real Perfections that Men have ever had any Notion of, they have been wont to give to the Self-existent BEING; they were sure that Something must be boundless in its Existence, both with regard to Time and Place; and as the Existence of that Something was excluded from no Place nor Time, that its Operation could not be hindered any *where* nor any *when*. As these Powers and Privileges, I say, were always thought to have a real Existence in Nature, they were as constantly ascribed to the Self-existent BEING; for the Excellency of such a Nature must be, according to our Conceptions, if any Thing be so, entitled to all possible Perfections; but then it must be very hard to conceive two such Beings with all these Powers and Privileges; as for Instance, We shall be hard put to it to find Room for more than One of such a Kind of Beings, as would by Itself fill up and exist in every Part of the infinite Space, as it must of Necessity, since 'tis supposed to be Infinite or Immense.

TILL the *Atheist* can tell us how to provide a Reception for a second Infinite, when all is already taken up by the other; we must beg Leave to affirm, that he has a much greater Difficulty upon his Hands, than the Religious Man has, when he is called upon to account for Good and Evil upon the Foot of a Good God. For as the *Atheist's* Self-existent Beings, are supposed to be Material, they cannot be both in the same Place; and therefore a Second cannot be at all, because the First is supposed to be Infinite, and to have already filled all the infinite Space.

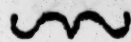
BUT farther, The Idea of Power sticks close to our Idea of the Self-existent BEING, and yet our Ideas will not allow of halving or dividing the Power between Two; because this would be to admit Two Powers that could controul one another, and disturb each other in their Operations; which furnishes out a very faint Idea of Power, too much limited and restrained to be given to a Necessarily-existent and Infinite BEING. For in this Case, neither of the Self-existent Beings would be able to produce any one Thing without the Interposition of the other. And therefore every Being in the World would be the Effect of their opposing one another, and so receive not its Nature from either, but from both.

As the Appearances of Things are no where pure or unmix'd Good, nor pure or unmixt Evil, some Persons have discovered a great Fondness for Two Contrary and Independent Principles, hoping that such a System would perfectly well account for the Mixture of Good and Evil, as whatever should be produced from the Struggle and Conflict of two contrary Powers, must of Course partake of the Nature of both. But however fond they may be of this Way of solving the Difficulty, they may do well to consider, whether the ascribing to the Necessarily-existent BEING such a limited Power as evidently contradicts our clearest Ideas, be not a better Proof of the Falshood of this *Hypothesis*, than any Arguments they can bring against the Being of a God from the *Phæ-nomenon* of Good and Evil, the first we are sure cannot be the Truth, for Reasons I have already given; the last may possibly be true, altho' we cannot clear up every Difficulty that may offer itself to us, when we are endeavouring to reconcile Good and Evil with a Good God. But,

2dly, I WILL now shew, that supposing the Possibility of the Existence of Two or more Contrary, Independent Principles, that yet they would not, any more than *Spinoza's* System, account for the Appearances of Good and Evil in the World.

I HAVE, as I before observed, avoided entring into a particular Detail of the Difficulties that are met with in reconciling Evil with a Good BEING, because the Learned Dr. *John Clarke* has lately *ex professo* examined them; however, I hope, even in this Way of Handling the Matter, to shew, That the *Atheist* is an Unreasonable Person, if he has left Religion for the Sake of this Difficulty. As I have already shewn, That the Scheme of many Self-existent

Gurdon. Principles, the Refuge of some *Atheists* from this particular Difficulty, is inconsistent with our plainest Ideas: If I can also shew, That should we give him any of his Schemes on the Foot of Plurality, yet he would not be able to account for the Difficulties; we shall leave him without any Shew of an Excuse, if he pretends to have left us, that he might stand clear of Difficulties.

V.


SUPPOSING then for once, the Possibility of the Existence of Two or more Independent Principles of contrary Natures; these Principles must either have an equal or unequal Force. If they were unequal Powers, then the superior Power acting necessarily and to the utmost Stretch of its Power, must, in an eternal Duration, have destroyed all the Effects of the weaker Power; And then if the superior Force were Good, there could be now no such Thing as Evil; or if Evil, no such Thing as Good; neither of which will answer to the true Appearance of Things. The *Atheist* cannot defend himself by the Ancients, who supposed unequal, contrary Powers to have always had an Existence, without destroying one another: For altho' the ancient *Theology* of the *Pagans*, as we find by the Poets and other *Mythologists*, consisted of many contrary Principles endued with unequal Powers; tho' the good Beings, such as *Jupiter*, &c. were supposed by them to be superior in Power to their *Vejoves*: yet they might easily believe the eternal Co-existence of such unequal Powers, or that the lesser were not destroyed by the Greater; because they supposed *Jupiter* and the rest of the Good Principles to be *Free Agents* that acted with Views and for Ends, and might therefore believe that the Good, tho' a superior Principle, had permitted the Action of the inferior Evil Being, in a Way of Punishment to such as had broken the Laws of those Beings, who were the Principles of Goodness. But as to the *Atheistick* Principles which act necessarily, or because they can't help it; and consequently, act to the utmost of their Power, the eternal Subsistence of unequal contrary Forces must be impossible, for the Reason already given; and therefore they cannot account for the State of Good and Evil in the World. But,

2dly, IF we take two contrary Principles of equal Force to account for Good and Evil, then as they act necessarily, and therefore to the utmost of their Powers, their continual Opposition to each other must either produce nothing but Confusion; that is, the evil Principle must destroy as fast as the Good Principle produces any Thing, because the Evil Principle is supposed to have as much Power, and to be under as great a Necessity of using that Power as the Good One: Or else an equal Mixture of Good and Evil must run thro' all Things, as the necessary Result of the Equality of their mutual Opposition. For there is no third Way of conceiving the Effect of the Agency of two necessary, equal, and contrary Powers. But if neither of these be agreeable to the truth of Things, then the *Atheist* is not to be justified in rejecting Religion for the Difficulty of solving the Appearances of Good and Evil, because every pretended Solution upon the Foot of *Atheism*, will then appear to be false.

1st, THE Appearance of Good and Evil cannot be accounted for by Two contrary, equal Principles; because if they acted Necessarily, the Effect of their mutual Action would be nothing but Disorder and Confusion, as Two equal, contrary Powers must of Necessity destroy the Operations of each other. Monsieur *Bayle*, as fond as he shews himself upon all Occasions of the *Hypothesis* which pretends to account for Good and Evil by Two contrary Principles; was yet sensible, that Two such contrary Natures, unless they acted with something like Freedom, could never account for Good and Evil; and therefore when he is making an Apology for *Zoroaster*, he represents him as justifying his Two Principles in this Manner: "That it was with his Two Principles for some Time, "as it was with Mr. *Hobbs's* Men in a State of Nature, and before the Establishment of Societies; that every Man was an Enemy to every other Man, and "did each other all the Mischief they could; and thus, says he, it was with "the Two Principles at first, till they, as well as Mr. *Hobbs's* Men, weary of "such a confused State of Things, in which one Principle was continually "overturning what the other was building up, came at last to an Accommoda-

“tion, and joyned amicably together for the future, in the several Productions *Gurdon*.
“of Nature *.” Mr. *Bayle* enters into so many Particulars in his Vindication of *SERM.*
this Doctrine of *Zoroaster*, that we may believe he look'd upon it as the most *V.*
rational Solution of the present Difficulty. But from hence we may observe,
That Two contrary Principles, so long as they acted Necessarily and to the ut-
most of their Power, could produce nothing but a State of the utmost Confu-
sion and Disorder; because this is supposed and allowed to have been the State
of Things previously to the Agreement of the Two Principles: and then with-
out such Agreement, every Thing must have been still in Confusion, and dif-
ferent from what we see at present; and therefore were it possible that this
Account of Things could be the Truth, yet it would do the *Atheist* no Service,
unless he would allow the Existence of Beings that act upon Choice, which he
always steadily denies, and while he does so, can have no Right to any Advan-
tage from this *Hypothesis*.

IF it be said, That such an Accommodation is consistent with Necessity, and
that a good Principle is necessarily determined to such an Accommodation, as a
Mixture of Good and Evil is better than no Good at all; the Answer is, That
such a Determination must be the Effect of Choice and of a Freedom of acting,
and not of any absolute Necessity of the Nature of the Being; because the Ope-
rations of a Being that acts from a Necessity of Nature, will always be as inva-
riable as its Nature; and therefore if they both acted from a Necessity of their
Natures, the Effect of their acting must be always the same, and no Room for
Variation, which this Accommodation supposes. 'Tis true, the *Atheist* allows
Men the same Power of transacting with each other for their mutual Benefit,
and yet denies them a Liberty of Action: but I am persuaded they would not
persist in denying such mutual Agreements between Men, to be an Argument of
Choice and Freedom, if they could see any Possibility of reconciling Liberty
with their Material Scheme. For they cannot but see a Difference between
Moral and Physical Motives, between being moved to act by a Reason, and
being forced into Action by an external Impulse; and that this Difference exists
in the Nature of Things, and therefore they would never have made them to be
the same, if they could have fetched them both from Matter, and yet supposed
any Difference between them. But,

To proceed, If the *Atheist* finding he can make no Advantage of this ima-
ginary Accommodation between the Two Principles for a Solution of the pre-
sent Difficulty, should rather take up with another, which the same Mr. *Bayle*
proposes in the Title *Paulicians*, viz. “That the Good Principle opposes with
“all its Might and without ceasing the Sin and Misery of the Creature; but
“that the Evil Principle acting on its Side with all its Strength in Opposi-
“tion to it, there results from this continual Shock of the Two Principles, that
“Mixture of Good and Evil which we see every where, as the Action and Re-
“action of two contrary Qualities produces a third Quality partaking of the
“Nature of both:” If, I say, he has any Hopes from this Way of solving the
Difficulty, we will shew, that this cannot be the true one, Because supposing
such a Conflict between Two contrary Principles, if they did not, as I have al-
ready observed, turn all into Confusion, then the Consequence would be, that
there must be an equal Mixture of Good and Evil running thro' all Things;
whereas if this were the Case, there must be an invariable and uniform Appear-
ance of Good and Evil; the Mixture of Good and Evil must be the same in
every Part of Space, as well as every Part of Time, because it proceeds from
Two contrary Causes acting necessarily and to the uttermost of their Powers;
and therefore no Reason can be given why their Action and Reaction, or the
Result of them, should not be the same in every Part of the infinite Space,
their Powers being supposed to be equal. But if the same Quantity of Good
and Evil had been blended together from Eternity, and uniformly diffused thro'
the Infinite Extension, there could have been no such Thing as human Conduct

* *Histor. Dist. in voce Zoroaster.*

Gurdon. or Wisdom, no Possibility of chusing the less Evils or Inconveniencies to avoid
 S E R M. greater ones ; because the Inconveniencies must be equal which Way soever we
 V. act, if the Evil be equal or as much in every Part of Infinite Space as the
 ~~~~~ Good is.

AWAY then with all the Maxims of Wisdom which Men have hitherto pretended to distinguish themselves by, if the same Degree of Evil must be expected, act as wisely as we will. But if the real State of Things proves, that there is more evil in one Way of acting than in another, this shews that the Mixture of Good and Evil did not proceed from Two contrary Principles acting necessarily ; but from One Free and Intelligent BEING, that has judiciously annex'd different Degrees of Evil or Inconvenience to different Ways of acting, in order to make a Trial of our good Sense in chusing the least Inconveniencies. In this Way of accounting for Good and Evil, we can suppose them mixed together, and yet leave Room for the Exercise of good Sense : Because a BEING that acts not from any Necessity of Nature, but with every Degree of Freedom which is consistent with acting wisely, may so order the Constitution of Things, as to leave it in the Power of some Beings, if not entirely to separate the Evil from the Good, yet, at least, when there are different Degrees of Evil, to take the lesser : Whereas if Good and Evil proceeded from two different and contrary Causes acting necessarily with all their Force, it could never be in the Power of any particular Beings, such as Men, to alter so far the Original Constitution of Things as to take Good without taking an equal Portion of Evil ; because it cannot be supposed, that what has been joyned together by two infinite Powers, can possibly be separated by Man. But since all the World allows a Difference between wise and foolish Conduct, the Appearance of Good and Evil such as it really is, cannot possibly be reconciled by an *Hypothesis* of Two contrary Principles acting necessarily.

AGAIN, as Wisdom and Folly are not reconcileable with Two contrary Principles acting necessarily ; so neither will the unequal Allotment of Good and Evil to some Sorts of Men, receive a Solution from Two contrary Principles ; for Beings that act necessarily, it must be granted, cannot be Respecters of Persons, but must disperse their Favours or Resentments promiscuously to all that come in the Way of them, and not single out particular Persons for that Purpose. This is so plain a Deduction from the *Atheistick* Scheme, that *Lucretius* could not deny it ; and therefore when he comes to that Part of Nature which relates to the Dispensation of Good and Evil, he plainly gives up the Cause of *Atheism*, in acknowledging that this was not to be accounted for by any Laws of mere Matter and Motion ; for speaking of the Misfortunes of great Men, of which the Histories of all Times had furnished great Numbers of Instances, he drops his Atoms, and has Recourse to I know not what hidden Power that took a Delight in making a Jest of all human Grandeur. *Usque adeo res humanas vis abdita quædam Obterit, & pulchros fasces sævasque secures, proculcare & ludibrio sibi habere videtur.\** We may by the Way observe, That *Lucretius* does here the same Thing for which he and other *Atheists* have thought fit to laugh at the Religious Man ; because his Material Causes were found by him not sufficient to answer this *Phænomenon* of Nature, he is contented to take Refuge in an unknown Cause, a Θεός ἀπὸ μηχανῆς, and yet when we have recourse to a God, they will allow it no better a Name in us than a Cloak for our Ignorance. But if the *Atheist* would declare as fairly with regard to several other *Phænomena* as *Lucretius* has done in this particular one, he would find as much Want of a GOD for extricating him out of other Difficulties, as *Lucretius* did in this concerning Good and Evil.

IF the Religious Man meets with some Difficulties in reconciling the Misfortunes of great and good Men with a Good BEING, yet nothing has been thought clearer than that Something besides the necessary Laws of Matter and Motion must have had a Hand in human Affairs. There was always so much

\* *Lucret. Lib. 5:*



seeming Caprice, such Inconstancy, and Changes so sudden, and so unaccountable in the History of great Men, particularly of such as had been great and good Men, that it has been always thought necessary to have Recourse to some Agent that governs all Events with perfect Freedom, and not to Matter in Motion, whose Laws were too steady and too regular to account for them. For 'twas easily seen that the Workings of Necessary Agents must be as unchangeable as their Natures. And therefore a more regular Course of human Affairs than the present, must have arisen from the Action of a Being or Beings that brought Things about from a Necessity of Nature.

Thus we see the *Atheist* is never the nearer towards giving himself Satisfaction concerning Good and Evil, when he exchanges *Religion* for *Atheism*: But if he deals fairly with himself, he will only find this Difference, That whereas he stumbled at some Appearances of Evil which he could not reconcile with Goodness or the Existence of a Good Principle, he must now see every Solution he can give of this *Phænomenon* upon the Foot of *Atheism*, plainly impossible to be the Truth.

Gurdon.  
SERM.  
V.

VOL. III.

LIII

SERMON



## S E R M O N VI.

A C T S xvii. 28.

*For in Him we live, and move, and have our Being.*Gurdon.  
S E R M.  
VI.

**T**H E S E Words are Part of a Speech St. Paul made upon Mars-Hill at Athens, in Justification of himself against the Charge of endeavouring to introduce a new Religion into that City; he tells them, That he had Preached no strange Gods, but the very same GOD whom they themselves worshipped, under the Title of the UNKNOWN GOD, tho' they were entirely ignorant of his Nature, as was plain by their erecting Temples to Him for his Habitation and Residence. Whereas himself had erected this stately Frame of the Universe, and therefore could never be in Want of a Room or Place to dwell in; neither could He want the Assistance of Men for making Him Altars and Images, for that He had given Life and Breath to those very Men by whose Skill and Workmanship they pretended to honour Him. We find by the 18th Verse, that the *Epicureans* made a Part of our Apostle's Congregation, for they went along with him from the Market-place, where they had been Disputing, to the *Areopagus*. These Men had willfully mistaken the Nature of GOD, and impiously stripp'd the DEITY of all the Privileges that had been universally allowed to belong to it; for the God of *Epicurus* had no Hand in the making the World, he neither moved the Matter of the World, nor directed its Motions, he was neither concerned in the Inanimate nor Animate Part of it, and must be therefore shut out of all. For as to the Motion of Matter, from whence all its Variety arises, that was supposed by them to have been Eternal; and as for Life, that was nothing more than the particular Organisation or Structure of the Parts, such as is seen in Animals; which Organisation too was entirely owing to Chance or Fortune, without the least Interposition of their Gods. And as to the Nature of their Gods, we find by *Democritus* (from whom *Epicurus* took a great Part of his *Philosophy*) that they were beholden to Matter for their Existence; for he supposes them to be nothing but the Images of Objects, which according to his Way of Thinking, were continually flying off from all Corporeal Objects; as appears by *Tully* \*. Had this been the real Truth of the Case, a Worship, such as that at Athens by Images, had been worthy enough of such imaginary Beings, or rather more than they deserved: But St. Paul tells them, That this was to mistake entirely the Nature of GOD: for that He was the sole Cause of all Things, and the sole Giver of all our Powers of Action; for that 'twas in Him we all of us both lived, and moved, and had our Beings.

HAVING already considered some of the most material Objections which the *Infidel* is wont to urge against the Being of a GOD, and shewn that they cannot be a good Reason for denying Him, because the Appearance of Things will necessarily require the Existence of such Powers and Properties as we ascribe to Him, and which the *Atheist* pretends to find Fault with; I am now to represent some of the Arguments on which the Religious Man grounds his Belief of a GOD, drawn from the most considerable *Phænomena* in Nature, such as Mo-

\* Democritus qui tum imagines earumque Circuitus in Deorum Numero refert. Cicer. de Natura Deorum Lib. 1. p. 28.



tion, Thought, and the Order of Things, which *Plato* calls the τὰ εὖ καὶ καλῶς. *Gordon*. I will begin with that of Motion, and shew, That there is no possible Way of S. B. R. M. accounting for its Existence, unless we will admit a God, or which is the same III. Thing to the *Atheist*, a Being distinct from Matter, and yet acting upon it.

T H E R E are but three possible Ways of accounting for Motion, either by supposing that there has been an infinite Succession of Impulses communicated from one Body to another from Eternity, without any active Principle either in Matter or without it; or that there is an active Principle in Matter, that it is Self-active, and Motion essential to it, or else that there is some Being distinct from Matter, that is the Cause of its Motion. I will shew, that neither of the two first Ways of accounting for Motion, can possibly be the Truth; and therefore that the Cause of Motion, must be some Being distinct from Matter, the same BEING, which our Apostle made the Subject of his Discourse to the *Athenians*, the God that made Heaven and Earth; the sole Giver of Life and Animal Motion, for that 'tis in Him we live, and have a Power of moving ourselves. And,

1<sup>st</sup>, A N infinite Succession of Impulses without an Active or Moving Principle, will never give Birth to Motion, because this would be to bring an Effect upon the Stage without the Help of a Cause. And yet absurd as this is, *Spinoza* was able to give no better an Account of Motion, or at least thought this to be better than to suppose with some, that Motion was a necessary Attribute of Matter. And tho' all the World agrees, That in a finite Time 'tis absurd to suppose an Effect without a Cause, which must be the Case, if Motion was not an essential Attribute of Matter; yet *Spinoza* would never undertake to show how an infinite Time would make any Sense of it; and therefore always avoided giving a direct Answer, when he was press'd by his Friends to explain how Matter could ever come into Motion, if Motion was neither essential to Matter, nor proceeded from any external Cause. This last he could never own without giving up the Cause of *Atheism*, and therefore would never speak plainly to this Point, as appears by the Sixty-third and following Epistles in his Posthumous Works. This Behaviour of *Spinoza's*, makes it reasonable to believe, that he himself would have given up his Account of Motion, if he could have saved his Scheme and his Reputation. And as *Toland* too has thought fit to reject it as indefensible, I shall take no farther Notice of it, but proceed to the other *Atheistick* Account of Motion, which *Toland* thinks will be sufficient, without troubling the Supreme BEING, viz. That Motion is essential to all Matter, and Action as much an Attribute of Matter, as Extension or Solidity; and consequently, every Atom of Matter is necessarily Self-moving, or active from the Necessity of its own Nature.

T H E World has had so strong an Opinion of the natural Inactivity of Matter, that *Spinoza* had not Courage enough to oppose it; but *Toland* finding *Atheism* was not tenable, if Matter was really Inactive, was resolved to try whether he could not defend its Activity, as the only Refuge left for the sinking Cause of *Atheism*. The Arguments he makes use of to prove the Activity of Matter, are these:

1<sup>st</sup>, " B E C A U S E, he says, Motion, as well as Extension and Solidity, is included in our Idea of Matter; that whenever we separate Motion from Matter in our Idea of it, 'tis only a partial Consideration of it, or an abstracted Notion of the Mind; and therefore no more a Proof that Matter can exist without Motion, than that Mathematical Lines, Surfaces and Points, have any Existence in Nature, because they are in the Heads of *Mathematicians*.

2<sup>dly</sup>, A N O T H E R Reason he urges for the Activity of Matter, is, " Because in Fact all Matter is in Motion."

A T H I R D Reason is this: " That tho' there should be some Objections against it, that much greater ones would lie against an External Mover of Matter."

I N answer to these Arguments of his I will shew,

1<sup>st</sup>, T H A T our Idea of Matter, when we leave Motion out of it, is no abstracted Notion of the Mind, but a compleat and adequate Idea of it.

2<sup>dly</sup>,



*Gurdon*, 2<sup>dly</sup>, THAT tho' all Parts of Matter were in Motion, it would not follow that Motion was an essential Attribute of Matter.

VI. 3<sup>dly</sup>, THAT the Activity of Matter is inconsistent with some Appearances in Nature.

4<sup>thly</sup>, THAT the Objections against God's being the Author of Motion, are not such as should discourage any rational or unbiass'd person from acknowledging, That 'tis in God we live, and have our Animal Being.

1<sup>st</sup>, I AM to shew, That our Idea of Matter without Motion, is not a partial Consideration of Matter, but a compleat Idea of it.

THE Reason which has always determined the World to look out for a Cause of Motion extrinsecal to Matter, was this: Tho' they could easily conceive it capable of being moved and divided; yet the conceiving it to be undivided, undiversified, and unmoved, was a more simple Notion of Matter, than the conceiving it divided and moved. This being first in Order of Nature, and an adequate Conception of it too, they thought it necessary to enquire and give themselves an Account how it came out of this State, and by what Causes Motion, from whence this Diversity in Matter arose, could come into the World? *Descartes*, altho' he allowed the Infinity of Matter as well as *Toland*, was yet sensible that even this would not alter the Nature of Matter, nor the Idea that every Body had of its Inactivity, and therefore could see no other Way of altering its primitive Idea, and reconciling it with the Motion of Matter, but by introducing another Infinite Being, viz. a GOD that had sufficient Power to rouse Matter out of that sleepy, inactive State in which its Original Idea had represented it. And *Toland* would have found himself under the same Necessity of admitting a GOD for the Mover of Matter, if he had not endeavoured to impose upon his Reader by confounding Divisibility and Mobility, with actual Division and an active or moving Power, as we shall see presently. For he acknowledges, that the true Conception of Matter is this: That it is every-where the same, and only diversified by Motion; so as by his own Confession, the conceiving Matter in Motion, is a departing from that Unity of Substance, that Sameness of Nature in which our Ideas represent it to us. For all Diversifications of Matter must of Necessity be so many Removes from the natural Unity and Identity of Matter, according to his Conception of it.

ARISTOTLE, who was confessedly the best Reasoner among the Ancients, and not thought to be at all prejudiced in Favour of Religion, is yet very clear in this Point: in his first Book of the *Metaphysics*, cap. 3. he condemned those who stopp'd short at the material Cause of Generations and Corruptions, without looking after the Efficient Cause. "For, says he, altho' all Corruptions and Generations, are variously produced from Beings more or less compounded, yet 'tis necessary to enquire, How this happens, and what is the Cause? For the Subject of all these Changes cannot possibly change itself, viz. The Wood and the Brass cannot be the Causes that one of them is turned into a Bed, the other into a Statue; but Something else must be the Cause of these Changes. But to enquire after this, is to enquire after a Principle of Motion, or some Being that has a Power of beginning Motion, and communicating it to Matter\*." For he could see nothing in the Idea of Matter, that would qualify it for acting upon itself. Mr. *Bayle* in *voce Leucippus*, confesses, That our Idea of Matter is compleat when it represents nothing to us but Extension and Solidity, and that Motion is not included in it, but is a perfect exotick, a foreign Idea, that has no more relation to Matter, than Thought or Understanding." The Evidence against the Activity of Matter from its Idea, is so clear and strong, that one would hardly have expected that this Idea should have been press'd into a contrary Service, and made to speak in behalf of the Activity of Matter. And yet Mr. *Toland* has attempted to prove Matter an active Being from its Idea.

\* Vid. Aristot. *Metaphysic.* Lib. 1. cap. 3.



As 1<sup>st</sup>, "FROM the Divisibility of Matter, which always makes a Part of our Idea of Matter. And,  
2<sup>dly</sup>, "BECAUSE our Idea of Matter always contains some Quality or other, which necessarily supposes Motion."

Gurdon.  
SERM.  
VI.

1<sup>st</sup>, FROM the Divisibility of Matter, his Argument from hence is founded upon this; because, as he supposes, we cannot conceive Divisibility without Motion; therefore we cannot conceive Matter which is always conceived as divisible, without conceiving Motion as inseparable from Matter. But this is plainly to make Mobility or the Capacity of receiving Motion, and Motion itself, or the *Vis motrix*, to be one and the same Ideas. For altho', indeed, we cannot conceive Matter to be actually divided, without adding Motion to our Idea of Matter; yet nothing more than a Capacity of receiving Motion is necessary to the making up our Idea of Divisibility: But this last has a plain and evident Distinction in our Conceptions of Things from the former. For we can conceive a Thing to be divisible, tho' it never should be actually divided; and when we conceive Matter as divisible, we at the same Time as well suppose it capable of continuing in an undivided State, as of changing it into a divided one. And therefore Motion is not necessarily included in our Idea of Divisibility. And consequently to say, That Divisibility makes a Part of our Idea of Matter, would be no Proof that Motion too must belong to our Idea of it.

BUT *Toland* goes further, and would prove, That Motion must necessarily be included in the Divisibility of Matter; because whatever is divisible, must have within itself a Power of dividing itself; for thus he speaks in his *Letter* concerning Motion \*; "If, says he, there was no *Internal Energy*, Matter would be incapable of Alteration or Division." But this can never be proved by him, unless he takes it for granted, that there is nothing in Nature besides Matter; which would be to beg the Question in Dispute between us and the *Atheist*. For 'tis plain if any Thing besides Matter had an Existence, he might have conceived Matter to be divisible without thinking of the internal Energy of Matter, because Matter would be as truly divisible, altho' we supposed it divided by something else, as if we suppos'd it divided by itself, and the Idea or Divisibility would be exactly the same in either Case. As to what he says, "That Motion is contained in our Idea of Matter: Because

2<sup>dly</sup>, "WE can never form an Idea of Matter devoid of all Qualities; and all Qualities are an Effect of Motion; consequently Motion is not to be separated from our Idea of Matter:" If by Idea, he means an Image or what may be an Object of our Senses, 'tis agreed, that in this Sense we can form no Idea of Matter divested of all Qualities; but this is to say nothing more than this, That we can't form an Image of a Thing which has no Image, or is no Object of our Senses; but still the Idea of solid Extension remains a distinct Idea from that of Motion, and therefore from all the Qualities that are a Consequence of Motion; which shews that there is nothing in the Nature of the Thing that should have hinder'd Matter from existing without Motion. And *Toland* himself acknowledges, "That Motion is not included in the Idea of Extension, nor any ways deducible from it †." And therefore if we can have any Idea of Solidity, a solid extended Substance may be conceived to exist without Motion, or without any Qualities that shall affect our Senses. Whereas there is no conceiving Matter to exist without Solidity and Extension, which shews *them* to be essential to Matter, and at the same time shews Motion to be not essential. And therefore he has plainly begg'd the Question in Dispute, in adding to the Idea of Matter a new Attribute, without any Proof that 'tis one.

HE was sensible that the universal Belief of a *Chaos*, was an ugly Argument against him, and therefore takes some Pains in ridiculing the several

\* Page 194.  
VOL. III.

† See his *Letter* concerning Motion.



Gurdon. Methods the Ancients took of bringing Matter out of that Confusion, in  
 SER M. which all Things were supposed to be while the *Chaos* lasted. But how ri-  
 VI. diculous soever *their* Schemes might be, yet this is evident, that they could  
 and did conceive Matter to have an Existence altho' unmoved, and of course  
 without any of those Qualities that result from the Movement of Matter.  
*Ovid* in describing the Chaotick State, tells us, "That there was no Kind  
 " of Diversity, but the same Face of Things thro' the infinite Extension.\*"  
 That the whole was *rudis indigestaque moles, nec quicquam nisi pondus iners*.  
 By which the Poet intended to express the lazy and stupid State in which  
 Matter lay during the *Chaos*, and till the Chaotick Matter began to be stirr'd.  
 Mr. Bayle was as much out of Humour with the Account that *Ovid* had  
 given of the ancient Opinion concerning a *Chaos*, as *Toland*, and therefore un-  
 reasonably falls out with the Description he has given us of it. That he may  
 make his Account inconsistent with itself, *Ovid* is brought in representing all  
 the Variety in Nature as if it had an actual Existence, before there was any  
 such Thing as Motion; when he says, speaking of the Chaotick State, *Frigida  
 pugnabant calidis, humentia siccis, mollia cum duris*, &c. and yet he had  
 just before told us, that the Whole was an homogenous Substance, *Unus  
 erat Naturæ vultus*; whereas what *Ovid* says is very consistent. He sup-  
 poses the *Chaos* to be an homogenous Substance, which upon its being  
 moved, was diversified into Bodies of very different Natures, and not that  
 any such Diversity had any other than a possible Existence, till it was  
 moved. And if Mr. Bayle had not been prejudiced against a *Chaos*, it ought  
 to have pass'd with him for a fine Piece of Imagery, when the Poet represents  
 the Change that was made by Motion, that Earth, Air, Fire and Water,  
 which had been hitherto blended together, were then separated from each  
 other. For the best Philosophers are agreed, That all Matter is really the  
 same, and that all the Diversity that appears in it, is owing to Motion. And  
 therefore a Poet might well represent the simple and uniform Face of Matter,  
 as containing within itself all these Diversities, even before it was moved, be-  
 cause it was capable of receiving them; without supposing them to have had  
 an actual Existence till the *Chaos* was put into Motion: which is enough to  
 clear the Poet from the Inconsistency which Mr. Bayle would charge upon him,  
 and at the same time to satisfy us, that the Ancients had a Conception of Mat-  
 ter as an uniform Being before it was moved. And consequently, that *Toland's*  
 Conceiving Faculty was very defective, if he could not conceive Matter with-  
 out Motion. But,

2dly, I AM to shew the Weakness of another Argument he brings for  
 the Activity of Matter, viz. "That in Fact all Matter is in Motion." And  
 supposing it true, it would not follow that Motion was an essential Attri-  
 bute of Matter. For if Motion is not, as we have already shewn, included in  
 our Idea of Matter, but we can as well conceive it at Rest as in Motion; altho'  
 there should be no Bodies perfectly at Rest, it would not yet follow that Mo-  
 tion is essential to Matter; but on the contrary, for this very Reason, (viz.  
 That Motion is not contained in the Idea of Matter) we ought to look some-  
 where else than in Matter for a Cause of its Motion; and as 'tis proved to be  
 foreign to our Idea, to look abroad for a Powerful Cause, such as God, that  
 had impress'd Motion upon Matter. But *Toland* lays Stress upon this Argu-  
 ment, and says †, "Seeing every Part of Matter is always in Motion, you  
 " should conclude that Motion is essential to the Whole, for the same Reason  
 " that you think Extension to be so; because every Part is extended." But the  
 Case sure is very different between Motion and Extension, because Extension is  
 confessedly included in our Idea of Matter, whereas Motion is not so. Besides,  
 if *Toland* reasons justly, the Universality of Motion can be no Proof of its being

\* *Ante mare & terras, & quod tegit omnia Cœlum,  
 Unus erat toto Naturæ vultus in orbe,  
 Quem dixere Chaos.*

*Ovid. Metamor. L. 1.*

† Page 204.



essential to Matter, because he allows the Centripetal Force to be universal, *Gurdon.* and belonging to all Bodies; for he describes it thus: " 'Tis that by which all *SERM.* " the Bodies of the Earth are drawn or tend towards its Centre, as all others to *VI.* " the proper Centres of their Motions. \* " And yet he does not allow that particular Determination, which we call Gravity to be essential to Matter; and therefore Motion may belong to every Part of Matter, and not be essential to it; it may be universal, and yet proceed from an external Cause that has moved the Whole. But,

3dly, THAT Motion cannot be essential to Matter, may be made plain from these Three Reasons.

1st, BECAUSE there could be no such Things in the World as Bodies or any Concretions of Matter; which would render the Face of Things quite different from what it appears at present.

2dly, BECAUSE there would be no Variation as to the Quantity of Motion, if all Matter was Self-active; and yet we think it very evident that the Quantity of Motion does and must continually vary.

3dly, A THIRD Reason that demonstrates the Inactivity of Matter, is, That Bodies of equal Bulk or whose Surfaces are equal, do yet weigh unequally.

1st, BECAUSE there could be no such Things in the World as Concretions of Matter, if Matter was self-active. The present Face of Matter appears to us to be divided into *Æther*, and an infinite Number of large Combinations of Matter floating in that *Æther*; whereas if Matter had been self-active, it could never have concreted into such Globes as those of the fix'd Stars, Planets and Comets; but must have every-where appeared in the highest State of Fluidity, as fine as the present *Æther* in which they swim. For if Motion were essential to Matter, it must belong to every the smallest Part of Matter, and consequently must be equally spread thro' the whole Mass of Matter, and then no possible Reason to be given why some Parts of Matter should be more divided than others, since every Atom of Matter must equally partake of the dividing Principle. This shews that there can be no Reason given upon this *Hypothesis*, why the dividing Effect of Motion should ever cease till Matter was ground so small as to be incapable of any further Division; the Consequence of which would be a World not at all like what we live in; and therefore ours can never be accounted for by any such Scheme as *Toland's*; but the Assistance of a GOD will be necessary for moving the Matter of the Universe, if we pretend to account for the Diversity that is seen in the different Portions of Matter. But,

2dly, A SECOND Reason why Matter cannot be self-active, is this; Because there could be no Variation as to the Quantity of Motion, no increasing nor lessening the Quantity of it; for if Motion be essential to every Particle of Matter, no one Particle of Matter can any otherwise lose its Motion, but by losing its Being in the Universe; and yet we think it very evident, that the Quantity of Motion does, and must continually diminish. 'Tis certain the greatest Philosopher that ever this Globe produced, is fully persuaded that Motion must vary, that 'tis Generable and Corruptible: " But, he says, " what by the Tenacity of fluid Bodies, the Wearing of their Parts, and the " necessary impairing of the elastick Force in solid Bodies, the Quantity of " Motion must diminish rather than encrease, unless the Loss of Motion be " repaired by an Active BEING that can supply those Losses †." And 'tis certain, that he is supported in his Persuasion by a plain Matter of Fact, as in the Case of two hard Bodies of equal Force, that are not elastical; when such Bodies meet together, they lose all the Motion they were before possessed of. And if this be true, the next Enquiry to be made, is, What becomes of this Motion or active, impulsive Force? If it cannot be dispersed among the Parts of such Bodies, 'tis plain, that then all the Motion is entirely sunk and lost.

\* Page 205.

† Newton's Opticks.



Gurdon. That it cannot be so dispersed, is as plain; because the Parts of such Bodies  
 S E R M. are incapable of any tremulous Motion for want of Elasticity; and if it should  
 VI. be denied that the Parts of those Bodies would lose the Motion of their Wholes,  
 there is this plain Argument against it, That it would then follow, that Bodies perfectly hard and elastical would reflect with a double Force, viz. the Force arising from the Elasticity, and moreover all, or at least, part of the original, direct Force; which, as the very Learned Dr. *Samuel Clarke* has observed in his Letters to *Leibnitz*, is contrary to Experience.

I CANNOT but observe by way of Inference from the loss of Inanimate Motion, that as the Original Laws of Motion could never have taken Place, or had any Being in the World, unless there did Exist something Superior to Matter that had Impressed those Laws of Motion upon it; so those Laws could never have continued, unless there were an Active Being in Nature, that was always ready to Exert upon Matter a certain Force or Activity, in proportion as the Motion was diminished; which proves the Existence of a BEING, that not only gave Motion to Matter, but also of a BEING that still continues constantly to repair the weakning by Time of the first Impression of Motion. And this shews the Necessity of admitting a Governour of the World, who by his Providence may Interpose in the preservation of it, as well as of an Original Author of Motion, and of this World, which is an Effect of a wonderful Direction of that Motion. From whence it follows, That the Notion of some Persons who believe that GOD had Impressed a certain Quantity of Motion upon Matter at the Creation, and then left it to shift for itself, believing this to be a sufficient Account of the Appearances of Things, cannot possibly be true; because we have already shewn, that the Quantity of Motion must necessarily diminish, unless there was some Active BEING that could *constantly* keep it up in the same State and Condition. And if the Inanimate Part of the World could not have been preserved in Motion without the continued Action of some BEING putting forth its Force according to those Original Laws of Motion, much less could the Bodies of Plants and Animals, which are vastly the most considerable Parts of our Earth be formed and preserved by Matter directed at first according to any whatever Laws of Motion. From hence too it appears, that God does not act as an *Anima Mundi*, not as a Part, but as a Governor of the World; because such a Being would be nothing but Fate and Nature, which can never be reconciled with the necessary Diminution of the Quantity of Motion in the Universe; as Fate or Nature must always act to the utmost of their Powers; and therefore if the Effect of their Activity could be at any Time abated, it could never be restored or repaired again. Consequently we have gained a BEING that not only made the World, and established at the Beginning the Laws by which it should for the future be governed; but also a BEING that still watches over his Workmanship, repairs any Failures in it, and continues it in its State as long as He thinks fit: Which is the Religious Man's Notion of a GOD, a BEING that is not far from any of us; *For 'tis in Him we live, move, and have our Beings.*



# S E R M O N VII.

ACTS V. 28.

*For in Him we live, and move, and have our Being.*

**H**AVING already shewn, That if we will not admit a *GOD* for a mover *Gurdon.* of Matter, there will be only these two possible Ways of accounting for *S E R M.* its being in the World, either in supposing an Infinite Series of Impulses *VII.* or Communications of Motion from one Part of Matter to another, without any Original Cause of those Impulses, which is supposing an Effect without supposing any Cause of that Effect: Or,

*2dly*, THAT Motion is an essential Attribute of Matter, and therefore all Matter an active Being.

IN answer to the suppos'd Activity of Matter, I propos'd to shew,

*1st*, THAT our Idea of Matter, is a compleat and adequate Conception of it when we leave Motion out of it.

*2dly*, THAT it would not follow, that Matter was an active Being, were it, never so true, that every Particle of Matter was in Motion. And

*3dly*, THAT the Activity of Matter is inconsistent with some Appearances in Nature: As

*1st*, WITH the great Diversity that appears in the Face of Nature, that some Parts of Matter are condens'd into solid Bodies, and others in a high Degree of Rarefaction; whereas if Matter was self-active, the Whole must necessarily be reduced into the smallest Particles into which Matter is capable of being divided. A second Reason I gave, why Motion could not be an essential Attribute of Matter was, because there could then be no Variation as to the Quantity of Motion in the Universe, and yet 'twas evident that the Quantity of it must gradually diminish, unless its Losses were constantly repaired by some active Being. Thus far I proceeded in the last Discourse.

A Third Reason by which I propos'd to shew the Inactivity of Matter was from hence, That Bodies of equal Bulk or whose Surfaces are equal, do yet weigh unequally; for if there is no accounting for this *Phænomenon*, without supposing the heavier Body to contain more Matter than the lighter one of the same Bulk, then 'tis plain, that Matter must be an inactive Being, since the encreasing the Quantity of Matter in any Body, tho' there be no encrease of its Surface, by which its Motion might be retarded, shall encrease the Difficulty of putting it into Motion: This very Argument will hang as a Millstone upon the Neck of the *Atheist*, as it makes it impossible to reconcile this *Phænomenon* of Nature with the Mechanical Laws of Motion, which is all that the *Infidel* has to depend upon for the Support of his *Hypothesis*. For 'tis certain that all Mechanical Causes do act in proportion to the Surfaces of the Particles that they act upon; whereas 'tis as certain, that Gravity, whatever be the Cause of it, acts proportionally to the Quantity of solid Matter, without any regard to the Superficies of the Bodies; so as Bodies which are the same in Bulk, shall be very different in their Weight. *Lucretius* saw plainly that there was no accounting for the different Gravity of Bodies of equal Bulk, without having recourse to a *Vacuum*, and supposing a greater Quantity of Matter in the heavier Body. He



*Gurdon.* indeed, very weakly supposes Gravity to be an inherent Quality in Matter, and  
 S E R M. that all Bodies had a natural Tendency downwards, tho' we are sure there could  
 VII. be no such thing as downward or upward in an infinite Space. But however,  
 he saw evidently that the general Activity of Matter, which he believed as well  
 as *Toland*, would not account for this *Phænomenon*, without admitting another  
 Principle of Action, *viz.* Gravity; he believed his Atoms had been in Motion  
 from Eternity, but did not think *that* Motion sufficient to account for the dif-  
 ferent Gravitation of Bodies towards a Centre \*.

LET us now see how *Toland* would derive this peculiar Affection of Matter,  
*viz.* of moving towards a Centre, from the general Action of Matter; or how  
 he would account for the *unequal* Resistance of Bodies of *equal* Bulk. It will  
 quickly appear that he is so far from being able to derive Gravity from the ge-  
 neral Action of Matter, that this very Gravity proves to a Demonstration the In-  
 activity of Matter. 'Tis plain, as I have already observed, that all Mechanical  
 Causes act by Contact, and upon the Surface of Bodies; and 'tis as plain, that  
 Gravity acts quite otherwise, and affects the solid Contents of Bodies, by pene-  
 trating the very Substances of them, and therefore can never be produced by  
 the general Action of Matter, because that is suppos'd to act superficially, as all  
 Mechanical Causes are wont to do. But supposing it possible to derive Gravity  
 from the general Action of Matter, which *Toland* aims at, it would do him  
 no Service, because he cannot avoid making an increase of Gravity, and conse-  
 quently of Resistance to Motion, to depend upon an increase of Matter: For  
 he supposes the Centripetal Force to be, not indeed as *Lucretius*, a Quality in-  
 herent in Matter, but one of the Modes of *Action* in general, or a particular De-  
 termination of the general Activity of Matter. Let it be so; since 'tis evident,  
 that the Quantity of Motion in the Body must be the Sum of the Motive Forces  
 of all the Particles of Matter that are in that Body; if this Centripetal Force  
 be only a particular Determination of the general Action of Matter, there would  
 be no giving a Reason why the Quantity of that Force, or of that particular  
 Determination too, should not be computed after the same manner; and be the  
 Sum of all the self-moving Atoms in any Body; the Consequence of which  
 would be, That whenever we observed two Bodies of equal Bulk Gravitating  
 unequally, or tending towards a Centre with unequal Force, if we would ac-  
 count for such a *Phænomenon* consistently with *Toland's* Account of Gravity, we  
 must say, that one of the Bodies had a greater Number of the Self-moving  
 Atoms than the other, which necessarily supposes in the lighter Body a Space  
 void of Matter, which levels one of the strongest Retrenchments of the *Infidel*,  
*viz.* The Infinity of Matter, and at the same time its Activity: Because Ex-  
 perience tells us, That the more weighty any Body is, tho' nothing be added  
 to its Bulk, the more it resists to Motion; whereas if Matter was an active Being,  
 an increase of its Quantity could never increase its Resistance, unless its Surface,  
 by which alone Bodies could be retarded, was increased too. All that *Toland*  
 has to say for himself, is, "That this Difference of Resistance in Bodies of  
 "equal Bulk, may possibly arise from the different internal Contexture of those  
 "Bodies;" and all the Reason for such a Suspicion is drawn from the great Re-  
 sistance that some Fluids are observed to make above others, altho' of near the  
 same specifick Gravity, and consequently near the same Quantity of Matter;  
 which can be resolved into nothing, but a Difference in the internal Contexture  
 of such Fluids: But this Plea can have Force only in such Bodies as are not  
 equally fluid. For whatever be the Figure of the Internal Parts of Fluids, if  
 they are equally devoid of Tenacity, their Force of Resistance to any particu-

\* Denique cur alias aliis præstare videmus  
 Pondere res rebus, nihilo majore figurâ.  
 Nam si tantundem est in Lanæ glomere quantum  
 Corporis in Plumbo est, tantundem pendere par est,  
 Corporis Officium est quoniam premere omnia deorsum:  
 Ergo quod magnum est æque, leviusque videtur,  
 Nimirum Plus esse sibi declarat Inanis:  
 At contra gravius plus in se Corporis esse.

Vide *Lucretium*. Lib. I.



lar Determination as well as the absolute Force of Motion, can be only the Sum of the Forces of the Self-moving Particles in those Bodies. And therefore if a Cubical Inch of Water, and the same Quantity of Quick-silver, which are fluid Bodies, and free from Tenacity, did really contain the same Number of Self-moving Particles, whatever were the Figure of those Particles, they would equally resist to any Change that should be made of the Determination of their Motion. But as Experience shews this to be false; consequently, that fluid which makes the greatest Resistance to Motion, must have the greatest Quantity of Matter; and then the different internal Contexture of Bodies will not account for their different Weights, nor clear Matter from the Imputation of being inactive. But,

4thly, I AM now to shew, That the Objections against GOD's being the Author of Motion, are not such as should discourage any rational and unbiass'd Person from acknowledging, that 'tis in GOD we live and have our animal Being. The Difficulties that are rais'd against GOD's being the Author of Motion, are these:

1st, "THAT we cannot conceive how an Immaterial BEING, such as GOD is supposed to be, could act upon Matter, consequently, how He should move it."

2dly, "THAT if it were possible for Him to be the Author of Motion, there would be, as Toland thinks, this evil Consequence attending such a Supposition, that GOD must be the sole Cause of all the Evil and Wickedness that is committed by Men; 'twill then be GOD that actually moves the Tongue of a lying Witness, the Hand and Dagger of a Murderer."

THE first Objection is grounded upon this, "That nothing but Matter can move Matter." This is proved thus; "That the Mobility of Matter, or its Capacity of receiving Motion, is wholly founded upon its Impenetrability or Resistance; by the Means of which 'tis qualified for hindring any thing from coming into its Place till 'tis removed out of it; and consequently, the Active Principle must be a Material or Solid Being, because Matter could make no Resistance to the Action of a Being, that was not Material, and therefore could not be moved by it, as there can be no Action without a Reaction or Resistance on the Part of Matter." In answer to this it may be said, that tho' this Argument should hold good in all the Mechanical Communications of Motion from one Parcel of Matter to another, yet it would prove nothing to the Purpose in the Present Case, unless it was big with another Proof, viz. That all Causes must be Mechanical Ones. Supposing the Existence of such a Thing as Motion, which our *Atheists* will not venture to deny, we have made it evident that an Infinite Series of Impulses without any Original Cause of those Impulses is a plain Impossibility and direct Nonsense, and also that the Self-Activity of Matter is not only repugnant to the Conceptions we have of it, but is inconsistent with some Appearances in Nature: And therefore tho' we could not give a satisfactory Answer to those Objections against an Immaterial Agent's being the Author of Motion, it would by no Means follow that he was not. When *Zeno* was raising Difficulties against the Possibility of Motion, a Man in Company with him rose up and walk'd; this has been always look'd upon as a sufficient Answer, tho' no particular Solution was given of the Objections. If there are but Three possible Ways of accounting for Motion, and Two of them be evidently false, we shall have as good Evidence for the Third's being the true Account of Motion, as the Man that walk'd had for the Existence of Motion. And therefore how difficult soever it may be to conceive the Action of an Immaterial Being upon a Material One, yet as there is no other possible Way left, every unbiass'd Person must and ought to have Recourse to a GOD, for a Solution of this *Phænomenon*.

BUT farther we have seen already that there is a Principle of Action in Virtue of which Bodies act upon one another in a different Manner from what they would do by the Mechanical Laws of Motion, viz. Gravitation. Whatever be the Cause of this Action, the Fact is evident, that it penetrates the solid Substances

Gurdon.  
SERM.  
VII.



*Gurdon.* stances of Bodies, and therefore its Action cannot be founded upon the Impe-  
 S E R M. netrability of Matter, or the Resistance it makes to it; it going beyond the Sur-  
 VII. face of Bodies. Whereas the Argument against an Immaterial Being's acting  
 upon Matter is founded upon this Supposition, that there can be no Action upon  
 Bodies but by Contact or Striking upon the Surfaces, and the consequent Re-  
 sistance that Body makes to such a Shock or Impulse; which being evidently  
 false, the Argument drawn from it can be of no Moment.

BUT this is not all; when we come to consider the Matter closely, I am per-  
 suaded we shall find as much Difficulty in conceiving how Matter acts upon  
 Matter, as in conceiving how an Immaterial Substance should act upon a Ma-  
 terial One: For I will venture to refer it to any uprejudic'd Person, whether he  
 cannot as easily conceive that an Immaterial Being may act upon Matter with-  
 out Corporeal Contact, as that an Impulse upon a Part of the Body should move  
 the whole Body; for nothing can account for this, but the Adhesion of the  
 Parts of Body to each other, which is as much beyond our Conception of the  
 divisible Nature of Matter, as the Action of Immaterial upon Material; and  
 the Difficulty of conceiving it would encrease upon our Hands, if we should  
 suppose with *Toland* that every Particle of Matter was Self-active; because then,  
 as we before observed, all Matter must necessarily be in the highest State of  
 Fluidity, and consequently the Particles of Matter could have little or no Union  
 with one another.

2dly, THE other Objection against GOD's being the Author of Motion, is  
 this; "That then He must be the sole Cause of all the immoral Actions that  
 "Men are suppos'd to be guilty of; As when a Man bears false Witness, it is  
 "not the Man that bears false Witness, but GOD that gives Motion to his  
 "Tongue; when he commits Murder, it is GOD that does it, because 'tis  
 "GOD that moves his Hand and the Dagger by which he commits this Act."  
 Whatever Strength there is in this Objection, it must entirely rely upon the  
 Truth of this Supposition, That if GOD were the Original Author of Motion,  
 nothing else, no other Being whatsoever could have this Power of moving  
 Matter: And the Reason of this must be, either because this is a Power which  
 is in the Nature of the Thing incommunicable, as much so as necessary Exist-  
 ence and Independence, or at least, that 'tis such a Power as Man is incapable of  
 receiving: If neither of these be true, this Objection must amount to no-  
 thing.

As to the first Reason; If we contended for a Power of acting as we pleas'd,  
 where and as long as we pleas'd, and this independently of GOD, we might be  
 thought to plead for a Power which could not be disposed of, because there  
 cannot be two or more Independent Beings, no more than there can be two or  
 more Gods: But if when we contend for a Power of Self-motion in Man, we  
 only mean a finite or limited Power, confined to a small Portion of Matter,  
 and wholly depending upon the first MOVER for its Continuance, no Reason  
 can be given why such a Power as this may not be communicated. And there-  
 fore Mr. Bayle need not have put on such an Air of Concern, as he affects to  
 do \* at the *Hypothesis* of free Agents; as if the admitting such particular Self-  
 movers must necessarily exclude an Universal Mover. He brings an Instance  
 from the *Chinese*, among which People the Belief it seems of many Self-movers  
 had this Effect; the first Universal MOVER being wholly left out of their Sys-  
 tem of Religion. But then it must be observed, That the Belief of Free Beings  
 had not this Effect, till they had so far sunk the Notion of a GOD, as to make  
 Him only an *Anima Mundi*, that was acted upon by Matter, as our Souls are  
 acted upon by our Bodies; and had raised the particular Souls, that animated the  
 several Parts of the World, to such an Height, as to be almost entirely inde-  
 pendent upon Him; which is the *Chinese Philosophy*, as Mr. Loubiere assures us.  
 But so long as 'tis acknowledged, that the Self-moving Power is derived from  
 GOD, and depends upon Him for its Continuance; so long as 'tis confessed, that

\* In voce Spinoza.



in Him we *live, and move*, so long there can be no Fear of shutting out a *Gurden*.  
 GOD, from our taking in free Agents. And I am persuaded Mr. *Bayle* \* would *SERM.*  
 have seen no Danger to Religion from free Agency, if this had not threatned *VII.*  
 his darling Notion of a Principle of Evil; for he could easily see that all his  
 Arguments drawn from the Moral Evil that appears in the World, must lose  
 much of their Force, if once Free Agents were allowed of; because then GOD  
 might be the Original Cause of Motion, and yet not the Cause of Moral Evil,  
 of the wicked Acts committed by Men, or of the blasphemous Words they some-  
 times utter. But,

2dly, As to the other Reason, That granting some Degree of this Power  
 might be communicated, that yet Man would be a Subject incapable of receiv-  
 ing any such Power; 'tis confessed, that GOD cannot give any Powers or Qua-  
 lities to a Being that are inconsistent with that Nature which He has already  
 given it, and that such a Being would be incapable of receiving them; that  
*Axiom* in *Philosophy* being very true, *Quicquid recipitur, ad modum Recipientis*  
*recipitur*; therefore that GOD could not give to Matter a Power of moving it-  
 self, because Matter is naturally and essentially Inactive; and consequently the  
 communicating such a Power to it, would be destroying its Nature, and making  
 it cease to be what it is. And if Man was altogether a Material Being, the Ar-  
 gument might be a just one; but as we have already shewn, That the Author  
 of Motion cannot be a Material Being, the *Atheist* will never be able to prove,  
 that there cannot exist other Beings besides him that are not Material, and which  
 may therefore be capable, tho' Matter be not, of receiving from GOD a Power  
 of moving themselves, or of beginning Motion.

THE *Atheist* will perhaps say, That if the Immateriality of an Infinite BE-  
 ING be conceivable, yet not the Immateriality of a Finite or Limited one;  
 because 'tis not easy to see what an Immaterial BEING should be limited or  
 confined by, nor what should give it any particular Locality, or separate one  
 Immaterial BEING from another; that if we suppose them to be distinguished  
 from one another by the different Systems of Matter, that they animate; we  
 shall be forced to suppose something very unintelligible, because Matter is per-  
 fectly heterogenous to Immaterial Being: And whatever is such, can have no  
 kind of Relation to it, and therefore not that of terminating its Essence, and  
 by necessary Consequence we must be mistaken in accounting for human Ac-  
 tions by an Immaterial Principle, and then 'tis already granted, that GOD must  
 be the sole Cause of all a Man's Actions, and therefore of his wicked ones  
 too.

To avoid the Force of this Argument, some have fallen into a Notion of  
 an *Anima Mundi* that informed the Bodies of all Animals, and consequently,  
 that all that which we call particular Souls, was really one and the same  
 Soul; that the Difference in different Individuals, was not a real, but only a  
 seeming Difference; that it was every where the same numerical Soul that  
 animated the several particular Systems of Matter, all the different Bodies of  
 Individuals. But this was getting clear of one Difficulty at the expence of a  
 much greater one. For if we have any clear Ideas, they are certainly those  
 which concern Identity. And yet nothing can be more evident than this,  
 That whatever it is that thinks in several Individuals, it cannot be one and  
 the same in all of them, because that which thinks in each Individual, thinks  
 only for itself, and knows nothing of what passes in another, and therefore  
 cannot be the same in both of them, no more than in two Atoms of Matter,  
 one of them can be the same with the other. For Consciousness will be as  
 necessary to the Identity of a Thinking Being, as the same Particles of Matter  
 can be to constitute the same Material Being.

BUT in answer to the Difficulties of supposing Souls to be immaterial,  
 and yet separate or distinct Portions of Immateriality, it would be sufficient  
 to say, that Immaterial Beings may be separated from each other, tho' we

\* Bayle's Dictionary, Voce Spinoza.



*Gurdon.* could not conceive what it was that should bound or separate them; because  
 SERM. the narrow Faculties of our Minds cannot be supposed to take in all possible  
 VII. Modes of Being. This I say would be a sufficient Answer to this Difficulty;  
 for a Difficulty that owes all its Strength to our Weakness, can never be a  
 good Argument. If it could be one, then the Difficulty of conceiving the  
 Action of Immaterial upon Material, would sufficiently prove that there neither  
 was nor could be any such Thing, and yet we have already shewn it must be  
 true with regard to One Immaterial BEING, viz. GOD; and no one will  
 pretend to say, that there is any more Difficulty in conceiving the Limitation  
 of Immaterial Beings, than there is in conceiving this very Action of Immate-  
 rial upon Material. The limited Nature therefore of an human Soul ought no  
 more to be urged as a Proof of its being Material, than its acting upon an human  
 Body be brought as an Argument to prove it a Body too. Since then the Soul  
 may be immaterial, consequently GOD may have communicated to it a Power  
 of Self-motion; and then Man and not GOD, will be the immediate Cause of  
 all the evil Actions that are committed by him, and none of those ill Conse-  
 quences will attend the Supposition of GOD's being the Original Author of  
 Motion, which *Toland* seemed to be afraid of. And then too he might have ex-  
 changed his singular Opinion concerning the essential Activity of Matter, for  
 the Religious one which makes GOD the Cause of its Motion.

I HAVE insisted the longer upon this Point of Motion, because if I have  
 well proved, That there is no introducing Motion into the World without  
 admitting a Being distinct from Matter, the *Atheist* must then be contented to  
 give over all Speculations concerning the Nature of the Universe, and of the  
 Causes of that Variety we see in it; for no body will mind such an *Empirick*  
 in *Philosophy*, as pretends to furnish us with a World, when he knows not  
 where to look for a Being that would be able to move the Materials out of  
 which he is to raise the Fabrick of it. For this is plainly to introduce an Ef-  
 fect without being able to assign a Cause of that Effect.

FROM the Possibility of GOD's communicating to some Beings, as Men,  
 a Power of beginning Motion, I cannot but observe the Hazard which the  
*Atheist* runs, if he should be mistaken in his Clock-work Scheme, and he and  
 the rest of his Fellow-Creatures should prove to be something more than  
 mere Mechanism; because if he had a Power of directing any of his Actions  
 with Freedom, he might be accountable for his Behaviour in such Actions, if  
 there was any Being that could and would take account of them. This Pro-  
 position carries with it so much Evidence, that I believe the *Atheist* will not  
 venture to dispute it.

I HAVE already shewn, That there must be a Principle of Motion distinct  
 from Matter; that some Appearances in Nature prove to a Demonstration,  
 that this Principle of Motion does not act as an *Anima Mundi*, but with the  
 utmost Freedom; and therefore may take Account of the *Atheist's* Behaviour,  
 if by Freedom of acting he is qualified to give such Account. It will there-  
 fore very much concern him to be well assured, notwithstanding we have shewn,  
 That there are, and must be Causes that act not by any Laws of Mechanism,  
 that yet Man does; and yet if there are other than Mechanical Causes upon  
 our Earth, the *Atheist* cannot deny that Man may put in as fair as any Thing  
 whatever for being one of them; and therefore he may do well to consider  
 which way he can possibly satisfy himself that he is not one of them. Espe-  
 cially too when every Man thinks he feels within himself in many of his Ac-  
 tions a Power of beginning Motion at Pleasure, and independently of any  
 external Mover. But,

2dly, IF the Difficulties attending the Religious Scheme of GOD's being  
 the Author of Motion, be such as may reasonably be accounted for; the *Scep-  
 tick* too may do well to consider, whether his mere doubting what is true or  
 false on account of those Difficulties, will be a sufficient Justification of him  
 for not embracing Religion. Whether he ought not rather to enter into a care-  
 ful Review of those Objections, for Fear his Inclination to doubt of every  
 Thing



Thing might have tempted him to take for Difficulties those which are not *Gurdon*.  
 really such. The Lazy Part of Mankind, who have some Wit and less Learn- *S E R M.*  
 ing, despairing to gain any Credit by forming Schemes that would give some to- *VII.*  
 lerable Account of Things, have in all Ages chose the much easier Task of  
 puzzling, than of clearing up any Thing. They do not pretend to tell you,  
 as the *Atheist* does, how the Matter of the Universe may be stirred without the  
 Assistance of a *G O D*; but only, " That there are so many Difficulties in  
 " accounting for Motion either with or without a *G O D*, that they cannot see  
 " which Side of the Question preponderates; and therefore hope they may be  
 " justified in Doubting where the Truth lies." Tho' I should think that re-  
 jecting Religion when a Man pretends not to see any thing else to be true,  
 should be more Criminal, than rejecting Religion because a Man sees, or thinks  
 he sees some other Thing to be the Truth, and consequently, the *Sceptick* will not  
 run less Hazard than the *Atheist*, if his doubting concerning Religion, as well as  
 the other's positive Denial of it, should at last prove to be ill-grounded. Per-  
 haps the Security which both of them might promise themselves, supposing  
 them to be mistaken in denying or doubting the Existence of a First M O V E R  
 distinct from Matter, would be this: That altho' there should exist such an  
 Original Cause of Motion, yet it might not be an Intelligent Being, and there-  
 fore they should be safe, as it could take no Cognizance of what they were  
 doing here. But I believe it would be hard enough for any Man to conceive  
 Freedom without Intelligence. 'Tis possible indeed to conceive an Intelligent  
 Being without Freedom of Action; but there is no conceiving how a Being  
 should act freely without knowing what it does, and why it does any  
 Thing; but the Intelligence of the Supreme B E I N G will be made evident,  
 when we come to shew, that Matter cannot be the Subject of Intelligence.

S E R M O N



## S E R M O N V I I I .

A C T S xvii. 28.

*For in Him we live, and move, and have our Being.*Gurdon,  
SERM.  
VIII.

**H**A V I N G already shewn, That there is no introducing Motion into the World without the Help of a Being distinct from Matter, it would be plain enough that without such a B E I N G, no such Thing as Thought or Intelligence could ever have had an Existence in the World. For if Motion be necessary for the making Matter an Intelligent Being, as it must be if *Spinoza's* or *Hobbs's* Notion of Perception, which places it in the Action and Re-action of Bodies upon one another, were the Truth, then Intelligence could not be an essential Attribute of Matter, unless Motion was so too; and therefore must have some external Cause of his Being: This, I say, would be sufficient to shew, That *Spinoza's* Notion concerning the Existence of Intelligence, is altogether unphilosophical; because in such Case, Cogitation would be made to arise from nothing, unless he could believe this great Absurdity, *viz.* That Thought and Extension were the same Thing, or that Extension whether in Motion or at Rest was endued with actual Perception: Altho' if we can judge at all of the Nature of Intelligence from our own Perceptions, we must observe the Action of external Objects to be necessary to our having any actual Perception of what passes without us. *Toland* was so sensible of the Force of this Reasoning, that in his Discourse concerning Motion. he gives up *Spinoza* as a Person, that upon this Account is not to be defended. "The *Spinozists*," says he, "have afforded Matter of Triumph to the *Spiritualists*, (for such he calls the Believers of a G O D) by acknowledging the Inactivity of Matter; for in this they were so unphilosophical as to assign an Effect without any Cause of it; as in the Case of Cogitation, when they made it to belong to all Matter, and yet allowed Matter to be naturally without Motion or inactive\*." And yet as unphilosophical as it is to make Thought arise from still or inactive Matter, it will presently appear that those have not much the Advantage, who are forced to pump Sense and Intelligence out of senseless and unintelligent, tho' active Matter. Yet *Toland* must do this, or else with us confess, That there is some Eternal, Intelligent B E I N G that is the Cause of all the Intelligence which is seen in Mankind.

F O R there are but three possible Ways of accounting for the Existence of Thought or Intelligence:

1<sup>st</sup>, E I T H E R by supposing it an essential Attribute of Matter, as much so as Extension or Solidity; which is the Way *Spinoza* and Mr. *Hobbs* have taken. Or,

2<sup>dly</sup>, I N supposing that 'tis not essential to Matter, but is an Effect of the Motion of Objects on some particular Arrangement of the Parts of Matter; such as is seen in the Bodies of Animals. Or,

3<sup>dly</sup>, T H A T there is in all Intelligent Beings a Principle distinct from Matter, and of a different Nature, from whence Thought or Intelligence does arise;

\* See his Letter concerning Motion.



which is the Opinion of the Religious Man. Mr. *Lock*, indeed, supposes a *Gurdon*.  
 fourth Way of accounting for Intelligence: "That tho' Matter was a thought-  
 "less and senseless Being, and no Disposition of the Parts of it, how curiously  
 "soever they might be put together, would ever naturally rise up into Thought  
 "and Understanding, and tho' there was no Principle of Thought in Man distinct  
 "from Matter; that yet GOD by his infinite Power might superadd a Think-  
 "ing Quality to Body or Matter." But were this possible, it would do the  
*Atheist* no Service, because it supposes the Being of a GOD as necessary to the  
 producing such an Effect upon Matter as that of Intelligence; or if it could at  
 all favour him, it must then fall in with the second Way of accounting for  
 Thought, viz. That such a Quality as Thought might possibly arise from Mat-  
 ter disposed in such a Manner as are the Bodies of Animals, there being nothing  
 in the Nature of Matter that should make it incapable of receiving Intelligence,  
 and consequently, if the Bodies of Animals could be formed without the Help  
 of a GOD, there would be no Want of Him in accounting for that Thought  
 and Intelligence which belongs to those Bodies. But this, so far as the *Atheist*  
 is concerned in it, is exactly the same with the second Way of accounting for  
 Intelligence; and therefore I shall pass it over without any farther Remark:

AND proceed to a Consideration of the two Atheistick Accounts of Intelli-  
 gence, and in Opposition to them; I will shew, That Intelligence cannot be an  
 essential Attribute of Matter, nor an Effect of any peculiar Structure of the Parts  
 of a senseless Being, such as Matter is supposed to be by the second Scheme.

1<sup>st</sup>, THAT Intelligence cannot be essential to Matter.

THAT which gave *Spinoza* the Hardiness of advancing the Essentiality of  
 Thought to Matter was, That he thought he could not be disproved in his Af-  
 firmation, because we did not sufficiently know the Nature of Intelligence to de-  
 termine concerning the Subject of Thought; or to say what Sort of Being it  
 must be that is capable of having such a Quality; and therefore Matter might  
 be the Subject of it, for any thing we could say to the contrary. But the An-  
 swer to this is plain; Tho' I do not know all I could wish concerning Thought  
 and the Subject of it; yet I may know that Thought is not Extension; which  
 is enough for our present Purpose: Because I shall shew, That it must be Ex-  
 tension, if it be an essential Attribute of Matter. I may be certain, I say, that  
 Thought cannot be Extension; because to affirm this, would be just as if we  
 should affirm, that any Consequence of Extension, such as a Triangular or Square  
 Figure, and the Perception that the Mind has of such a Figure, were the same  
 Thing; but the Ideas of the Trine Dimension and Thought, are so evidently  
 different, that the Things represented by those Ideas cannot possibly be the same,  
 unless all our Perceptions are mere Deceptions; and then 'tis to no Purpose to  
 argue at all. But 'tis the *Sceptick*, not the *Atheist* that pretends to defend him-  
 self in this Way, whereas the latter always brings Reasons, such as they are, in  
 Support of a contrary Scheme to the Religious one. It must then be granted  
 me, that Thought and Extension cannot be the same Thing, and therefore we  
 are only to shew, That *Spinoza's* Notion of Thought's being essential to Mat-  
 ter, does by necessary Consequence make Thought and Extension the same  
 Thing.

THAT there can be no real Difference between them, may be made evident  
 by this one Consideration, That supposing them really different, one of them  
 must arise from Nothing; for both Thought and Extension cannot be necessa-  
 rily existent, if there be a real Difference between them, any more than there  
 can be two Necessarily-existent Beings, which *Spinoza*, as well as we, denies:  
 And yet by this Scheme of Things, Thought cannot be a Mode of Extension,  
 or derivable from it, but must be equally Self-existent with Extension. *Spinoza*  
 indeed pretends to assert, That the same Numerical Substance may have an infi-  
 nite Number of essential Attributes, and of these he names particularly Thought  
 and Extension, as different Attributes of the same Substance. But if the Diffe-  
 rence he means, be a real, and not a notional, or at least a modal Difference,  
 the Substances or Subjects of those different Attributes must be different too,



Gurdon. otherwise he destroys the Foundation of all our Reasoning, which is laid in  
 SERM. this *Axiom*, That those Things which agree with a third, must agree among  
 VIII. themselves: And therefore if Thought and Extension were so united together as  
 to constitute the same Essence or Being, and not different Beings, they must be  
 the same in Reality, and not different from one another, any more than the  
 same Substance can differ from itself. For, if every Part of Matter be endued  
 with Perception, and every Part of it extended, unless Extension and Thought  
 be of the same Nature, or one of them a Mode of the other, it will be impos-  
 sible to conceive how they should constitute the same Substance or Being; there  
 being no Room left for a real Difference, when the Whole and every Particle of  
 Matter is supposed to be both extended and intelligent.

THAT which led *Spinoza* into this Mistake was, his confounding notional  
 Attributes with real ones; as appears from what he says in one of his Epistles  
 in these Words: *Quod autem addis, nos ex definitione cujusque rei consideratæ uni-*  
*cam tantum proprietatem deducere valere, locum habet in rebus simplicissimis vel en-*  
*tibus rationis, at non in realibus. Nam ex hoc solo quod Deum definio esse ens ad*  
*cujus Essentiam pertinet Existentia, plures ejus proprietates concludo, nempe quod*  
*neccessario existit, quod sit Unicus, Immutabilis, Infinitus, &c. Et ad hunc mo-*  
*dum plura alia Exempla afferre possem quæ impræsentiarum omitto*\*. But there is  
 nothing plainer than that those Attributes of GOD he has instanced in, and  
 which he calls Properties, do no otherwise differ from each other, than as any  
 other abstracted Notions of Mind do differ from one another. For the Oneness  
 of GOD, his Immutability and Infinity, are Properties necessarily flowing from  
 a Necessarily-existent Nature, and cannot possibly be separated from such a Na-  
 ture without destroying it. Which shews them to be only partial Considerati-  
 ons, and not really different Attributes of the Divine Nature. Thus for In-  
 stance, the Existence of the Divine Nature may be considered without regard to  
 Time or Place; but this is plainly a partial Consideration, because infinite Time  
 and infinite Place, are the necessary Consequences of such an Existence, and  
 therefore cannot be really separated from it. Thus then it appears by these In-  
 stances which *Spinoza* has brought for the Support of his Opinion, that he did  
 not distinguish between real and notional Attributes. And therefore that he  
 has not proved it possible for Thought and Extension to be Attributes of the  
 same Substance, supposing them really different.

BUT as our present Unbelievers seem more inclined to depend upon the se-  
 cond Account of Intelligence, I shall proceed to consider how the *Atheist* de-  
 fends it, and what Arguments may be brought for the Support of it. All the  
 Arguments that can be brought to defend such a Supposition as that which makes  
 Thought to be Figure and Motion, or to arise from them, will be reduced to  
 these: Either,

1<sup>st</sup>, THAT we are ignorant of the Nature of Thought in what it consists;  
 and therefore it may be for all we know only Matter curiously put together, as  
 in the Bodies of Animals, and we know not all the Effects that may arise from  
 Matter in Motion, and therefore Thought may be one of them; that the Diffe-  
 rence between Thought and Figure can be no good Argument against it, because  
 we find certain Qualities, such as Colours, Sounds and Tastes, to be produced by  
 the different Motions and Figures of Bodies, and therefore why not the Thoughts  
 of the Mind, which are no more unlike to Figure and Motion than these are.  
 Or,

2<sup>dly</sup>, IT may be said that there is as much Difficulty in conceiving that  
 Corporeal Motions should excite different Ideas by acting upon an Immaterial  
 Substance, viz. that certain Motions in Objects should be the Reason of there  
 being constantly certain Sensations in an Immaterial BEING, as that Thought  
 should arise from some particular Situation of the Parts of Matter; and there-  
 fore where the Difficulties are equal, a Man may be at Liberty to take which  
 Side of the Question he pleases.

\* Vide *Spinoza* Epistol. 78. p. 59<sup>o</sup>, 599.



IN answer to the first Argument, That we are ignorant of the Nature of *Gurdon.*  
Thought, and know not all the Effects that may arise from Matter in Motion; *SERM.*  
We say, That we may know enough of the Nature of Thought, and the Nature *VIII.*  
of Body (without knowing every thing belonging to either) which may satisfy  
us, That Thought cannot possibly arise from Matter or Body, manage it as cunningly as you will. What *Tully* has said in his *Tusculan Questions* in Answer to a like Objection, will be a just Answer to this, *An si omnia ad Intelligendum non habeo quæ habere vellem, ne iis quidem quæ habeo mihi uti licebit?* Because we are ignorant of some Things, which would much enlighten the Subject, it does not therefore sure follow that we may not make use of what we do understand concerning it. If we do not know what Thought or Perception is, nor know all the Effects that may possibly arise from all the possible Ways of putting Matter together; yet we may know so much of the Nature of Thought and Figure, as to see that Thought is not mere Figure, nor a mere Passion or Reception of the Motion of Bodies. And then who shall hinder us from declaring what we do know of it, for this Reason only, Because we do not know every Thing belonging to it? I say, We may know that Thought is not Figure, altho' we know not every Thing belonging to Thought and Figure.

1<sup>st</sup>, BECAUSE in our Conceptions of Things, according to which we cannot help Judging, we find a real Difference between Thought and Figure, or between local Motion and the Perception of that Motion; and yet unless Thought be Figure and Motion, it will be impossible for any Man alive to conceive that Thought should arise from either or both of them. If Extension or Matter was a Thinking Being, we might then indeed conceive that from a more or less curious Arrangement of the Parts of Body, might arise more or less perfect Ways of Thinking, stronger or fainter Degrees of Perception and Sensation. But these Men grant Matter as Matter, to be as stupid and senseless as we could wish for. They acknowledge, that there is no more Excellency in the Atoms that compose the Eyes, Ears and Nose of a Man, than there is in any other Atoms that enter into the Composition of Bodies that are the farthest removed from any Thing like Life or Perception, and yet would vainly pretend from a good Management of those Atoms to derive Thought and Sensation. But let them prepare Matter as they will, so long as they confess it to be without Thought, they must have good Luck if they make any Body believe, that a single Thought can ever be drawn out of her. Mr. *Bayle* confesses, "That all those who deny the Distinction between Soul and Body, talk childishly, unless they suppose the whole World to be animated or endued with Understanding." And therefore in his Opinion, there is no conceiving the Existence of Thinking Beings, supposing the Soul to be material, unless we believe all Matter to be furnished with Thinking. And both *Spinoza* and *Hobbs*, who could neither of them endure the Belief of Immaterial Beings, were plainly forced to take Shelter in such a monstrous Doctrine as the essential Intelligence of Matter, because they saw there was no conceiving how the bare Movement of the Parts of Matter should ever produce Thought, if there was originally no such Thing as Thought in Matter. For he that says he can suppose the meer Disposition of the Organs of an human Body shall make a Substance to become thoughtful that had never Thought before, says what is impossible for him or any Man alive to conceive. For then he must make the Disposition of the Organs of an human Body to be Thought, altho' every Body else sees it can amount to nothing more than local Motion differently modified according to the Structure of those Organs, as the Movements in a Clock or Watch are regulated by the Disposition of its Wheels. But no body has ever ventured to affirm, That he could clearly conceive local Motion alone to be sufficient to make a Substance devoid of all Thought and every Sentiment, to pass into actual Thought, or that any Substance could possibly pass from a Privation of all Thought to actual Thought, merely by being moved. Because this would be to say, That a Change of the Situation of the Parts of Matter, was a Sense of Pleasure and Pain, an Idea of Moral Virtue, of Truth or Falshood, an Affirming or Denying a Propo-

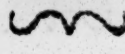


Gurdon. a Proposition, tho' at the same time we are sure we know fully the Nature and  
 SERM. Essence of Change of Situation, without conceiving any thing of Sense or Per-  
 VIII. ception belonging to it. And therefore if an evident Difference in our Ideas  
 will prove any Difference in the Things themselves of which they are the Ideas,  
 Thought cannot be Motion or Figure, nor Motion or Figure be Thought.

ARISTOTLE, after he had as he thought sufficiently provided by the Help of his Four Elements for all the Variety that appears in the Corporeal World, when he came to Thought, he presently saw that his Elements would never help him out, because mix them together in any Proportions he would, he saw no Likelihood of getting a single Thought out of them. And therefore, as Tully tells us, he saw himself under a Necessity of supplying the Defect of his Four Elements by adding a fifth to them, out of which he might extract all the Faculties of the Soul. *Aristoteles cum quatuor illa nota genera principiorum esset complexus è quibus omnia orirentur, Quintam quandam Naturam censet esse, è qua fit mens. Cogitare enim & providere & discere, & docere, & invenire aliquid, & tam multa alia meminisse, amare, odisse; cupere, timere; angi, letari. Hæc & similia eorum in horum quatuor generum nullo inesse putat.* Tusc. Quæst. And therefore the Aristotelians as they believed Beasts to be Thinking Animals, would not trust to the mere Organization of their Bodies for an Account of their Thinking; but contrived for them a substantial Form entirely distinct from the Arrangement of the Parts of their Bodies, which should be the Cause of their Thinking; for this substantial Form, according to them, was neither Matter nor Body, nor composed of Matter. The Cartesians who on the contrary supposed Beasts to be barely Material Beings, would not allow them to be Thinking Beings, or to have any real Sense of Joy or Grief, Pleasure or Pain: So impossible did it appear to both those Sects of Philosophy to resolve Thought into mere Organization, or to make it a Mode of Extension. We may by the Way observe, that our modern Atheist does actually affirm Cogitation, Understanding and Volition, to be nothing but local Motion or Mechanism in the inward Parts of the Brain and Heart; whereas the Epicureans went no farther than asserting them to be caused by Motion; but still thought Motion and Cogitation to be different Things.

THE singular Notion which Des Cartes advanced concerning Brutes, That all their Actions, tho' some of them look'd like an Effect of Thinking, were yet nothing but the Movements of a Machine; and the Success this Opinion met with in the World, did probably give our present Atheist the Hardiness of affirming, That all Kind of Thought was nothing but Motion in a proper Structure of the Parts of Body. And it must be confessed, That if his Notions concerning the Actions of Brutes were true, there would be a plausible Reason for resolving all the Faculties of an human Mind into mere Mechanism; for altho' he did not allow Brutes to be Thinking Beings, yet so long as their Actions have an Appearance of good Sense, if such Appearances may be resolved into the Powers of Mechanism, there would be no great Difficulty in Accounting for the Operations of human Thought by the Help of a more curious and elaborate Organization; such as that of an human Brain. For if such Appearances of Thought, as those in Brutes, might be nothing but Motion, why might not Reflection, and such other Acts of the Mind by which we are wont to distinguish ourselves from Brutes, be performed by Motion too? But I am persuaded the more we consider this Matter, the more it will appear impossible that Thought should be Motion, or even that it should be drawn out of any Construction of Matter by the Help of any Degree of Motion whatsoever, unless a Way could be found out for furnishing Matter with the Gift of Thinking. For so long as Matter or Extension has not that Gift, the Atheist will be forced to father upon it a Brat that has not any the least Resemblance to its Parent, to assign an Effect to a Cause that has no Kind of Relation to it. We see an evident Dependence that the Divisibility of Matter has upon solid Extension, we see in this Extension a Reason *a priori* of all that Variety of Figures that Matter is capable of receiving, and of all the Mechanical Qualities which depend upon its Figure. But the Atheist



no more than we can see any Kind of Connexion, or any Dependence of *Gurdon*.  
Thought upon Figure or upon Extension in any Shape whatever. And there- S E R M.  
fore here is a *Phænomenon* in Nature for the Existence of which, upon the Foot VIII.  
of *Atheism*, no Reason can be given. 

I CAN see no Way the *Atheist* has left for retaining his Opinion of Thought depending upon the Organization of the Parts of Body, if he must acknowledge, that there is no Kind of Resemblance between Thought and Figure; unless he should say, That in this he supposes nothing more inconceivable than what the Religious Man supposes, when he ascribes to GOD Effects that have no Kind of Similitude to Him: And such confessedly are all Material Effects, that 'tis as hard to conceive that Matter should be derived from Thought, as that Thought should be wrought out of Matter. But the Answer to this will be easy; for the Religious Man does not suppose Material Effects to have flowed from GOD as from an emanative Cause, but to have been brought by Him into Being from Nothing; and therefore is not obliged to look out for any Resemblance between the Cause and the Effect; whereas the *Atheist*, rejecting all creative Power, must look out for such a Cause of the Existence of Beings as may have some Kind of Resemblance with the Effects depending upon it. Otherwise he must introduce Beings into the World without a sufficient Reason for their Existence.

HE will perhaps say, That Colours, Sounds and Tastes, are produced by Matter and Motion, and yet that there is as little Resemblance between these Qualities and the Figure of Bodies, as there is between Thought and Figure. And this would be a just Objection, if Matter and Motion did really produce Colours and Sounds; but these are in the Bodies themselves nothing more than different Degrees of Motion arising from the different Contexture of those Bodies. Whatever goes beyond this, has no real Existence in the Bodies, but is only a Cloathing which the Mind puts upon these Motions, which Motions are nothing more than an occasional Cause of the Mind's receiving such or such Ideas.

HAVING now shewn from the Ideas we have of Matter and Thought, that there is no Possibility of drawing Thought out of Matter. I will now proceed to shew, That the Unity and Simplicity of Thought, and the Continuance of one and the same Thinking Being for many Years together, which we must all of us confess to be true, can never be reconciled either with the Compound Nature of Matter, or with the continual Changes to which all Material Compositions are subject: I say therefore,

2dly, THAT Unity of Thought, by which we find all our Sensations united in one Thinking Being, could never arise from any Compound Substance, such as Matter, and every Construction of Matter is known to be, and therefore tho' we did not know all that we could wish for concerning the Nature and Subject of Cogitation; yet so long as we may know that a single Principle, such as that of Thought is, cannot be an Effect or Result from the Action of any Compound Being, we may venture with all our Ignorance of the Nature of the Soul to affirm, That human Thought was not caused either by Extension or by the Figure of an human Body.

'TIS evident that Man is one, not many Thinking Beings; that amidst all his various Sensations and Perceptions, there is some one single Principle that is the Subject of all of them; 'tis plain too, that there is something in Man, which thinks and contrives for the Benefit of his whole System; from whence nothing can be more evident than that there must be a Principle of Individuation, whatever it be, that joyns certain Parts of the human Fabrick together, and which thinks and acts consonantly for the Use and Purpose of those Parts: That there must be something in our Composition like to what I have already described, cannot be deny'd by any Body. The only Enquiry that wants to be made, is, Whether Matter in any Shape is capable of acting as a Principle of Individuation? And we are sure that 'tis utterly incapable for any such Employment; because which ever Atheistick Scheme we take, the Principle of Consciousness



*Gurdon.* would be a Compound Being. For, to begin with *Spinoza's* Scheme, which *S E M.* makes every Particle of Matter to be Cogitative, 'tis plain there must be as many Thinking Beings in Man as there are Particles in an human Body, unless the *Spinozist* would attempt to shew us a Way by which an infinite Number of conscious Parts of Matter may be melted down into one conscious Part. For notwithstanding the Union of Parts in a Compound, the Parts still remain as different from each other as ever, and therefore there must be good Reason for believing that the Thoughts of those Parts of Matter could be no more united than the Parts themselves. And as to the Government of the human Fabrick, it would be necessary for the *Spinozist* to shew how all the Atoms of an human Body were persuaded to chuse one Atom, and invest it with a Power of Acting for the whole, and what it is that hinders them from recalling their Grant, and acting separately? Till these Questions are answered, *Spinoza* will appear to have built a single Thinking Principle upon a very precarious Foundation. As he has never thought fit to give us any Satisfaction in these Inquiries, his Scheme must deservedly pass for a groundless and silly Account of Things in this Particular.

THE other Scheme, which would derive Thought from some particular Organization of the Parts of Matter, is liable to the same Inconvenience. For every Organization of Matter, being a Composition of Matter, will for that Reason be unable to furnish us with a single Conscious Being. *Tully* supposes them to be mere Blockheads that have advanced a Compounded Being into a Principle of human Thought. *In animi Cognitione dubitare non possumus, nisi plane in Physicis plumbei sumus, quin nihil sit animis admixtum, nihil concretum, nihil copulatum, nihil duplex. Tusc. Quæst.* And the Reason is plain; because if the Principle of Thinking was a Being compounded of Parts, all those Parts, as I have already observed, being the Subject of Thinking, would constitute as many Conscious Beings as there are Parts that constitute the Thinking Principle. For the Union of Parts in a Compound, is not an Union close enough to produce Unity of Thought; this will necessarily require the strictest of all Unions, *viz.* that by which Beings are united into a Sameness or Identity. Any Unity less than this, would never make a Man feel as he does, that all his Perceptions have a Relation to one and the same Thinking Being.

THAT such an Union as that of Identity, is necessary to account for Unity of Thought, is evident from this Consideration, That without such an Unity in the Principle of Thinking, we could never, for Instance, see the whole of any Object whatsoever; because if the Soul was a Being compounded of many Parts, every Part would only receive a Part of the Image of an Object, and no Part would receive the Whole, and consequently a Man could have no Image of the Whole of an Object, unless the Parts of the Soul could communicate to each other their Part of the Image. But there is no Ground for such a Supposition; because 'tis certain, that when any solid Body is put into Motion, every Part of the Body retains a certain Degree of Motion in Proportion to its Bulk, without communicating that Degree of Motion to any of the other Parts of the same Body. The *Atheist*, who owns the Relation between Thought and Motion, cannot except against this Argument, nor shew any Reason why one Part of Matter should communicate to another Part its Share of Thought, when there are no such Communications of Motion from the Parts of Body to each other. But supposing it possible that the whole Image of an Object might be impress'd upon every one of those Parts that are the Subject of Thinking, there would be this Inconvenience attending such a Supposition; that we must admit an Absurdity, and something harder to conceive than the Doctrine of the Schoolmen, which the *Atheist* is wont to laugh at, *viz.* That the Soul or perceptive Faculty would be then *tota in toto, & tota in singulis partibus*. For in this Case there would be a double Image of every Object; for every Atom that constitutes the Subject of Thinking, would have the whole Image of the Object, and all the Atoms taken together, would have the same whole Image too; which is plainly superfluous or needless, as well as 'tis inconceivable. If the *Atheist* looks



looks upon this as Nonsense in a Schoolman, when 'tis applied to an Immaterial Soul, he ought to give a Reason why it should not pass for such in him, when he applies it to a Material one. He ought to shew, That a Representation of Objects twice over, is impertinent in the one Case, but not so in the other; that the one is conceivable in a divisible Subject, but not so in an indivisible one, which an immaterial Soul is supposed to be. When he has done this, we will acknowledge that a Compound Being, such as Matter is, may be, for all that we have said to the contrary, the true Principle of Thought.

Gurdon.  
SERM.  
VIII.

BEFORE I leave the *Atheist*, I cannot but observe his unfair Dealing, when he pretends the Difficulty of conceiving some Powers ascribed to GOD, as a Reason for his rejecting Religion, and yet at the same time submitting quietly to the Drudgery of believing some of the most incredible Things in the World. This Particular of Intelligence will furnish me with a plain Instance of it, if we do but take Notice of his Method of extracting it out of Matter. He desires only Motion and a little Curiosity in the Composition of Matter, and then he has gotten Intelligence, tho' he knows Motion, before it came into such a Composition as that of an human Body, had no Sense at all; He knows too, that every Configuration of Matter without Motion is as senseless as any Thing that is most so; and this Man so hard to believe any thing of Religion, can believe that a Composition of Matter and Motion shall be Thought and good Sense, tho' separately there is not a Grain of Sense in either of them. He can believe one Sort of Figure to be nothing more than a Termination of Extension, but another Figure besides this shall be an Act of Sensation, by which it perceives its own Existence, and that of the Figures that surround it; that if Matter happens to fall into the Shape of Nerves and Bones, then Thought shall immediately start out of them; but if you mix up Matter in any other Shape, 'twill be nothing but senseless Matter, and not a single Thought to be got out of her. He can believe one Sort of Motion to be nothing but bare Change of Situation, when another Sort of Motion shall be, besides this, an Act of Joy or Grief, of Hope or Trust in GOD. He would be thought to be more nice and scrupulous in Examining into the Bottom of every Question than other People; and 'tis for this Reason he cannot go such Lengths in believing as the Religious Man. And yet this very Cautious Person can easily see that a Being made up of infinite Parts, may be the Cause of the most simple Thing in Nature, viz. Personality; That the Union of the Parts of Matter, is the same Sort of Union as that by which all our Sensations are united into one Thinking Person. He can believe as we have just now seen, that a Material, Divisible Soul may be *tota in toto*, & *tota in singulis partibus*; and yet can see nothing but unintelligible Jargon in it, if a Schoolman offers to apply it to a Soul that is not Material or Divisible into Parts. But I am persuaded these will appear to be Articles of Belief of so hard a Digestion, that the *Atheist* must not pretend to defend his Infidelity by objecting Difficulties in Religious Belief.

Now to the King Eternal, Immortal, Invisible, the Only Wise GOD, be all Honour and Glory for ever and ever. Amen.



## S E R M O N IX.

A C T S xvii. 28.

*For in Him we live, and move, and have our Being.*Gurdon.  
S E R M.  
IX.

**I**N the precedent Discourse I have shewed, That the Unity of Thought by which all our Sensations are united into one Thinking Being, and by which we are conscious to ourselves that we are not many, but one Thinking Being, could never be reconciled with the Compound and Divisible Nature of Matter; and therefore not with any Construction of Matter whatsoever.

I COME now to offer another Argument, why Thought cannot be an Effect of any Composition of Matter. Because we see the Consciousness of being the same Thinking Being, not only continued with all the particular Sensations of the Body, but even carried thro' all the Changes of Figure or Organization, that must happen to the Body, in the different Stages of a Man's Life. The Man shall be conscious to himself that he is the same Thinking Being, for Instance, at this present, that he was Forty Years ago; or as far as his Memory will carry him backwards to any distant Part of his Life already pass'd. Those who place Thinking in every Particle of Matter, cannot tell how 'tis possible to continue the *same* Thinking Being for even Twenty Years together, in which Time and much less, any *Anatomist* can tell us there will be a Sett of Atoms wholly new, and not one of the old ones left; and yet the Man is fully persuaded that he is still the *same* Thinking Being he was, and not *another*; acts accordingly, blames or commends himself for what he did some Years ago, as much as he does for his present Actions. The *Atheist* of this Kind will be obliged to shew how the same Consciousness can be preserved in a total Change of the Subject of Thinking, when *that* is wholly spent, and not one Particle of it left. Any one but himself would from hence conclude, that the Subject of Thought must be some Permanent Being, and therefore not Matter or Body, which are always changing and shifting the Scene.

IF it be said, That Consciousness of being the same Person, depends upon our Memory, and that our Memory may deceive us, that we may imagine that we have thought, and considered thus or thus, but we may be mistaken; we might be conscious of that as a Truth, which was perhaps no more than a Dream; and we may be conscious too of that as a pass'd Dream, which was perhaps never so much as dream'd of. Supposing all this to be true, that we are not really the same Thinking Being that we were some Years ago, but only think that we are such; yet the *Atheist* would be obliged to shew some probable Reason of a Man's thinking himself to be the same Person, when he is not such. And this I believe would prove as great a Difficulty as the other; for when the Subject of Thought is wholly changed (as we suppose) and a new one succeeds, there can be no more Reason for a Man's being conscious of what was done by his former self, than there would be for his being conscious of what was done by any other Person in the World. His present Self would have no more Relation or Acquaintance with his former one, than it would have with the most distant Man upon Earth, of whose Thoughts he neither knows nor pretends to know any Thing.

AND



AND as to the second Account of solving human Thought by the peculiar Organization of an human Body, this will as little account for the Sameness of Person in the different Stages of Life as the former; for those who make Thought to depend upon the particular Arrangement of the Parts, must allow, that the Difference in a Man's Opinions, in his Inclinations and Passions will depend upon the Difference of Organization; and yet a Man when he has changed his Opinions and Thoughts of Things, and has quite different Inclinations from what he had before, is yet fully persuaded that he is still one and the same Person with him who held those different Opinions, with him who had Inclinations different from his present ones. The Objects that move the Passions and Inclinations of Children, are usually very different from the Objects that delight the same Child when grown up into a Man; and yet the Child and the Man, for all this Difference, are united into the self-same Person; if we should compare a Man of the greatest natural Abilities that ever was, suppose *Cæsar* with himself when Five Years old (for so far backwards a Man's Memory may possibly carry him into the Childish Part of his Life, and we have already seen that the Consciousness of being the same Person, reaches as far as the Memory can acquaint us with what was done by ourselves) I say, if we should compare the man *Cæsar* with himself at Five Years of Age, there would be as much Difference between the Spirit and Understanding, the Passions and Affections of the Boy and the Man, as there would be between *Cæsar* the Man and another Man: And yet the Boy and the Man, with all their different Sentiments are acknowledged to have been the same Person. But this would be impossible, if Organization was the Subject of Personality, because then every Change in the Organization, must of Necessity produce a Change of Person; for I will defy any Man to conceive it possible, that the Subject of Personality shall be changed, and yet the Person continue the same. There being no possible Reason to be given, why Two Men, considered as Persons, should be really different from each other, but because the Subject of Personality is not the same in both of them: Which shews to a Demonstration that the Subject of Thought in Men, must be something that is Steady and Permanent, not any Composition of Matter which is perpetually changing.

ACCORDING to the Religious Man's Scheme of Things, this Diversity of Opinions and Practices in the different Parts of Life, is very conceivable by supposing some Alteration made in those Organs of Sense, by the Means of which the Soul has Notice conveyed to it of what passes without it. This, I say, would be easy enough to conceive, were there no Difficulty in conceiving the Union of an Immaterial Being with one that is Material, no Difficulty in imagining what those Bands and Ligaments should be, that could fasten together a Pair that are so little like one another, that there is not any one Quality or Feature, any one Disposition, internal or external, in which they resemble one another; and yet to find that whenever Body is affected by external Objects, that *Psyche* conceives a Thought, as if Body was the *Natural Parent* of that Thought; that from the Motion or Agency of Matter in an human Body, Thought should as certainly and steadily arise, as if Thought was the genuine Off-spring of Matter, and its Motion the real and entire Cause of that Effect: These 'tis acknowledged are great Difficulties; and come now in Course to be considered with the second Argument by which the *Atheist* is wont to justify himself, viz. "That there is as much Difficulty in conceiving that Corporeal Motions should constantly excite different Ideas by acting upon an Immaterial Substance, viz. that certain Motions in Objects should be the Reason of there being certain Sensations in an immaterial Being; as that Thought should arise from some particular Situation of the Parts of Matter." And yet we cannot allow this Difficulty to be a sufficient Reason for rejecting an Immaterial Soul; because we find by Experience that there are many Difficulties in Nature, which the *Atheist* must allow as well as we. For he must grant Something to be Infinite, and then there must be some Effects



*Gurdon.* flowing from the Action of an Infinite Power, that will not fall within the  
 SER M. Cognizance or View of a limited Understanding; and therefore the fairest Way  
 IX. of Determining, when there is a Necessity of Determining one Way or other,  
 is to weigh the Difficulties on both Sides, and see which preponderates, and  
 determine ourselves accordingly. And then I am sure the *Atheist* will gain  
 nothing by this Objection; for if we have shewn it to be impossible that Thought  
 should be Figure or Motion, or should arise from either separately, or from  
 both together, or that it should be an essential Attribute of Matter, and that  
 there is no other possible Way of Accounting for Intelligence, unless they will  
 admit an Immaterial Soul; there can be no Reason for suspending a Determination in such a Case on account of any Difficulties in conceiving the Action of Material upon Immaterial.

BUT the *Sceptick* will perhaps put the Objection in this manner; "That  
 " the Difficulty of conceiving the Operation of Material upon Immaterial,  
 " must be at least as great as that of conceiving Thought to arise from the Action of Matter or Body; because supposing the last to be inconceivable, 'tis  
 " no more so than the former, which no Body pretends to understand; and if  
 " the Inconceivableness of it be no Reason for rejecting the Action of Material  
 " upon Immaterial, neither ought the Inconceivableness of Thought's arising  
 " from Matter, be a Reason for our rejecting a Material Soul; because Matter  
 " being Infinite, many Effects may arise from it that a Finite Being cannot conceive; and then, Why not Thought? If we think ourselves sure that  
 " Thought is not Figure and Motion; we may be as sure that Matter can have  
 " nothing to do with what is not Matter. Consequently the Difficulties being  
 " equal, the *Sceptick* will say, there can be no sufficient Reason for determining  
 " this Question either Way."

IN Answer to this, 'Tis granted that we can no more conceive the Action of Material upon Immaterial, than the producing Thought from Figure and Motion, that is, we can conceive neither of them; so far then they shall be equal. But this is not all, we assert not only that we cannot conceive the Production of Thought from Figure and Motion, but also that we are sure 'tis impossible it should be produced merely from Figure and Motion; and this we are persuaded of, not because such a Thing is out of the Limits of our Conceptions, which the *Sceptick's* Objection drawn from the Infinity of Matter supposes; but because we see in such an Assertion a manifest Repugnance or Contradiction to our Conceptions, as I have already shewn\*. But I will defy the *Sceptick* to shew such a Repugnance in the Action of Material upon Immaterial; for since we have proved†, That the Principle of Motion cannot be a Material Being, thence it must follow, that an Immaterial Being does, and must act upon a Material one. And if Immaterial may act upon Material, I am sure it can never be proved impossible, that Matter should act upon that which is not Matter. For it can't be denied, that we may as easily conceive Matter to act upon *that* which is *not* Matter, as that what is *not* Matter should act upon Matter: We can as easily conceive that Thought should be a Consequence of the Motion of Body upon an immaterial Soul, as that Motion in Body should be a Consequence of *Volition*, which is the *supposed* Action of an Immaterial Being upon a Material one. This being plain, a fair Examiner would conclude, tho' he does not understand how 'tis, that the Action of Matter or Body upon the Soul depended upon the arbitrary Disposition of that God, who tho' Immaterial Himself, does move Matter, and was therefore able to unite Material and Immaterial in such a Manner, that the Motions of the former should affect the latter; and not, as the *Atheist* pretends, that such a Difficulty as this hinders him from seeing that some simple Being, (exempt from those Changes which Matter, and every Organization of Matter is subject to) is the Cause of Personality, or the Sameness of

\* See Sermon VIII.

† See Sermon VI.



a Thinking Being. We have then gained the Existence of something in *Garden.*  
Man that is not Material, viz. an Immaterial Soul. *SERM.*

IX.  
FROM whence we may observe, That the *Atheist* is deprived of the principal Advantage he proposed to himself in quitting Religion. We are told by the *Epicureans*, That the chief Aim they had in quitting Religion, was to free themselves from any Solitude and anxious Fears concerning a future State, as appears by *Virgil* and *Lucretius* \*. When our modern *Free-thinker* quotes with Pleasure these or such-like Passages, we may fairly believe him to be swayed by the same Motive; but 'tis evident he can never free himself upon any rational Grounds from such Fears. For if the Principle of Thinking cannot be a Being of a Compound Nature, he ought to tell us, and satisfy himself if he can, what can alter such a Being, and make it leave off thinking as soon as his Corporeal Structure becomes unfit for continuing any longer the Vital Functions. We can easily conceive that the Union of the Parts of a Compound Being, such as an human Body, may be broken; the Parts disband and take different Routs, and afterwards appear in another Form, by joyning together in a different manner, and composing some new System with different Qualities: Because such Parts, notwithstanding their Union, are really different from each other, and therefore will be capable of existing apart from each other; whereas there is no conceiving any real Difference in a simple Substance: Therefore as such it must be incapable of putting on another Form, or being divested of any Qualities that 'tis naturally possess'd of, and then the Dissolution of the Parts of an human Body will never infer a Total Cessation of Thought in such a Being as Man.

IF it be said that since a Defect in certain Organs of the Body shall cause a Disorder and a Distemper in our Thinking Faculty, why should not a Total Destruction of all the Organs bring on the Death of the Thinking Being, or a Total Cessation of its Thinking; or if an Original or Accidental Fault in any one of the Instruments of Sense, such as those of seeing and hearing, shall make us incapable of having any Thoughts concerning Colours and Sounds, or make us incapable of receiving any further Notices concerning the visible or audible Qualities of Bodies; therefore why should not the entire Destruction of all the Organs of Sense put a final End to all our Thoughts: It will be a sufficient Answer to this Objection, if we say that the Dependence which the Principle of Thought has upon the Body in its Operations of thinking while 'tis united to it, can never be so good a Proof of its totally ceasing with the Body, as the Simplicity of the thinking Principle will be to prove that it has no separable Parts, by whose Separation from each other, the whole might be supposed (as in Compound Beings) to exchange its thinking Quality for another that was not such. And therefore the Dissolution of a Compound Being, such as an Human Body, can never give the *Atheist* any reasonable Grounds for believing the Extinction of a Simple Being, such as the Principle of Thought is already proved to be. And as he allows not any Annihilations of Beings, he will never be able to tell us by what Means the thinking Principle in Man should lose its Faculty of thinking. Thus then the *Atheist* seems to be entirely disappointed, when he hopes by throwing off Religion to get quit of the Fears of an After-state.

2dly, GRANTING the *Spinozist* for once that the Consciousness of a Man's being the same Person or thinking Being in all the different Parts of his Life, may be reconciled with the Flux Nature of Body, with the continual Changes of its Materials; giving him even this I say to make the best he can of it, I am confident that upon second Thoughts he would not thank

\* Felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas,  
Atque metus omnes & inexorabile fatum  
Subjecit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari.

Et metus ille foras præceps Acherontis agendus  
Funditus, humanam qui turbat Vitam. *Lucret. Lib. III.*

*Virgil. Georg. Lib. II. v. 490.*



*Gurdon.* me for this Concession: For he will then be as little able to secure himself  
 S E R M. against the Fears of Evil in an after-State as he would be by believing a G O D;  
 IX. because there will be no destroying Thought even in this Case by destroying the  
 Body. For supposing Thought to be Extension, then the Dissolution of the  
 Body at Death could by no Means put an End to its thinking, any more than  
 it could to its Extension: And notwithstanding the Separation of the Parts of  
 an human Body when 'tis corrupted, yet all the Particles still continue to be  
 extended Substances, and therefore thinking Substances, if Thought be Ex-  
 tension, and Extension Thought. And then such thinking Substances, may  
 be obnoxious to as great or greater Evils and Miseries in another State than  
 they are in this. For when the Corporeal Particles that compose our *Atheist*  
 are separated at his Death, they must still retain a Sense of Pleasure and Pain,  
 or be capable of receiving either, if every Atom of Matter be thoughtful; and  
 he cannot be so weak as to think that no other Atoms, but those that form  
 the Thoughts of a Man, can be malicious, and do him a Mischief. And then  
 there may be many Thinking Substances in the Air and elsewhere, that may be  
 as well qualified to do him a Mischief in the future State, as the Atoms that  
 compose the Thoughts of Men are in this present One.

I F he says that the Thinking Atoms, of which his dead Carcass will con-  
 sist, can have no more relation to him than the Atoms of any other dead Bo-  
 dy, and therefore that he shall not be affected by any Sufferings of theirs; I  
 would then ask him the Reasons he has for believing so, so long, I mean as  
 he believes that the same Conscious Being shall continue in a Man for Seven,  
 or twice Seven Years; and yet every Body knows, that in such a Distance of  
 Time, there is not perhaps a single Atom left of the old ones. If after all  
 these Changes the Man still feels to his Grief, that he is the same Man now  
 in a Fit of the Gout, suppose, that he was Ten Years past in a Fever; what  
 Security can the *Atheist* have that Death will put an End to his Troubles?  
 Why not rather fear, that his dead Body may enter into the Composition of  
 some other System of Thinking Matter; and he become as sensible of the  
 Good or Evil that shall befall such a System, as he is of what befalls his  
 present Frame? I must affirm this to be as conceivable, as that every Atom  
 in a Man's Body should be changed, and yet the same Person or Thinking  
 Being continue; supposing the *Atheist's* Scheme a true one, *viz.* That human  
 Thought hath no other Cause of its *Being*, besides the perpetual Changes in  
 the Particles that compose an human Body. Thus we see that giving the  
*Spinosist* what he contends for, he is yet as far as ever from gaining what he  
 chiefly aimed at, and which he could not hope for in Religion, *viz.* Rest  
 and Impunity after he is dead.

B U T perhaps the other Account of Thought, which places it in a particular  
 Organization, may be espoused by some Persons as a better Security against the  
 Apprehensions of Evil in another World; as they think the Destruction of that  
 particular Organization must carry with it a total Extinction of Thought, and  
 consequently of Consciousness. Because if the Soul be nothing more than what  
*Dicæarchus* believed it, *viz.* A Body consisting of Parts of such a particular Fi-  
 gure as is necessary to Life \*, when the Body loses that Figure which is necessa-  
 ry to its Life, the Power of Thinking must be entirely lost with it. But even  
 here, safe as the *Atheist* thinks himself, while he endeavours to avoid the Im-  
 mortality of Thought, by denying that it is an essential Attribute of Body, is  
 not so near a total Cessation of Thought as he hopes for. For he must allow  
 Thought to be one of the Modifications which Body is capable of receiving;  
 and then he must acknowledge, that there is no destroying any Mode, without  
 producing another of the same Kind; because it fares thus with all the Modes  
 of Body with which we are acquainted; for the Corruption of one Mode is al-  
 ways the Generation of another of the same Sort; as we see the discharging of

\* Nec quidquam nisi corpus ita figuratum, ut temperatione Naturæ vigeat & sentiat. Vid. Cicero Tuscul.  
 Quæst.



one Colour, is an introduction to another; the loss of one Figure the gain of another. If it be said, that Motion is a Mode, and may be totally extinguished, and therefore why not Thought? I answer, That Motion is not a Mode which depends upon Body or any Attribute of Body for its Production, but from a Cause wholly different from and foreign to it, as I have already shewn\*; where- as Thought is supposed by the *Atheist* to be entirely derived from the Body, and therefore must either depend upon some Attribute of Body, or proceed from nothing. But of all such Modes as are founded upon the essential Attributes of any Substance, and derive their Modality from thence, it will be always most true to affirm, that you only Change one Mode for another of the same Sort, but no more destroy them all, than you can destroy the essential Attributes from whence they flow. And therefore tho' that particular Way or Mode of Thinking which belongs to the human Fabrick may cease, yet we can see no Reason why all Sort of Thinking should be extinguished with it, any more than why the Extinction of one particular Figure in Body should draw after it the Destruction of all Figure, which we know to be impossible without an utter Annihilation of the Body. This Reasoning would equally hold tho' Thought was not a Mode of Extension, but of some unknown Attribute of Matter, because it would be no more possible to destroy a Mode of that unknown Attribute without generating another, than it would be in the Case of Extension.

BUT then the *Atheist* will say, That a different Mode will have no concern with him, and he cannot be affected by any Sentiments of Pain that his Body may be affected with in another State. I will allow him to be as positive in this as he pleases, when he is able to tell me (I mean upon any Foot of *Atheism*) what 'tis makes him to be the same Person at this Time, when he believes Matter or the World to be the supreme and only Being, with that self who perhaps formerly believed, as we do, an Intelligent Being that created the World. What it is that makes him believe himself as much concerned in the Pleasure and Pains of the former Parts of his Life, as in those of the present Time, tho' many considerable Alterations may have happened in his internal and external Fabrick. When he can reconcile this Sameness of Person with all the Changes that his Body has undergone in a Course of many Years, it will be then time to grant, that the Thoughts of the dead Person may have no Concern with those of the living one. Till then, the *Atheist* by this Scheme, no more than the *Spinozist*, will be able by any fair Deductions from his own Principles to secure himself against the Fears of Evil in a future State, since we have already seen he cannot prove a total Cessation of Thought after Death, nor tell us what Change of Organization will certainly destroy Consciousness. Or that such a Change as that at our Deaths, must necessarily do it, so long as he allows Consciousness to keep pace with all the Changes that happen to a Man in a long extended Life.

THUS then the *Atheist* must be a most unhappy Creature, when he cannot live without GOD in *this* World, but he must be without *Hopes* too of being at Rest when he is *out* of it.

\* See Sermon VI.



## S E R M O N X.

ROMANS i. 22.

*Professing themselves to be Wise, they became Fools.*Gurdon,  
SERM.  
X.

**T**H E S E Words were designed by St. Paul against those who frequented the Schools of the Philosophers, and yet did not leave off the Assemblies at the Heathen Temples, where GOD was worshipped in an Image or Similitude of a Man, or what was more unworthy of Himself, a Bird or Beast, or even a Reptile or creeping Thing, as we find by the 23d Verse. No doubt these Men richly deserved this Censure of St Paul's, viz. That notwithstanding all the Learning of the Schools, their Conduct shewed them to be as ignorant of the Nature of GOD as any of the meanest of the Vulgar, whilst they joyned with them in paying Honour to such ridiculous Representations of the DEITY. And yet I cannot help believing that the School of *Epicurus* in St. Paul's Days, and their Successors the *Spinozists* in ours; have a much better Title to this Censure of our Apostle, than any other Sect or Sort of Men that either now are, or ever were in the World; and that they have not shewn stronger Marks of Ignorance and Folly in any one Point of their *Philosophy*, than when they endeavour to account for the curious Contrivance of this World without the Help of a Contriving Agent.

**T**H E *Atheist's* Way of Rearing up the World is thus: He supposes the whole Material World, such as we find it, to be the onely God or Necessarily-existent Being; that the whole Frame of Things, the Heavens, the Earth, and the regular Order in which they appear to us, proceeded as an Effect from the unguided, but necessary Laws of Motion from Eternity: That the several Species of Animals, as well as the Inanimate Parts of the World, and even Rational Beings, such as Men, did all spring up from these unguided Motions.

**T**H E *Alchymists* with their Philosopher's Stone, may pass for sober and serious Persons when compared with these Men; for they pretended only to the Secret of moving Matter in such a Manner as to transmute it into Gold; but these People pretend to give us a World full of Contrivance and Curiosity merely by the Help of Motion, tho' there shall be no Body to direct that Motion. For tho' *Spinoza* supposed his Matter to be furnished with Understanding, yet he did not allow it to make any Use of its Understanding in directing any of its Motions; for these are supposed by him to be the Necessary Laws of Matter in Motion: Whereas the *Chymist's* Matter that was to make Gold was managed by an Intelligent Agent, and 'tis possible to suppose a proper Motion among the several Degrees of Motion might be given it, but the *Atheist* has left his Matter to shift for itself, he allows it may be stirred, tho' he cannot tell by what, or by whom, as we have already seen\*; but however, he will have no Sense or Wisdom to stand by, either to distribute proper Quantities of Motion, or to direct the Line they were to describe; and yet he is confident that this regular and orderly Frame of Things shall arise from such undirected Motions, an admirable Conceit! as the Author of the *Characteristicks* says, believe it who can.

\* See Serm. VI.



AND yet this Man pretends to be shocked at Difficulties in religious Belief, *Gurdon.*  
 at the same time as he sees no Difficulty in Rearing up this World without any *S E R M.*  
 Assistance. The greater the Undertaking, the greater, I suppose, is the Share *X.*  
 of Credit he proposes to himself; but sure I am, his Share of Credit will dwindle  
 into that of the Wise Men in my *Text*, who *professing themselves wise, became*  
*Fools.* For none but a Fool would offer to confound the Differences between  
 Wisdom and Folly, Sense and no Sense, Contrivance and Chance, or uncontriv-  
 ing Necessity. For if unguided Motions shall execute as regular a Piece of  
 Work, and as well fitted for answering any Ends or Purposes, as those that are  
 directed by the best Sense, we have then nothing left us whereby to judge what  
 makes the Difference between good Sense and no Sense, between Wisdom and  
 Folly. If it were possible for us to be mistaken in the Nature of Thought and  
 Motion; yet as the *Atheist* will not say, that all Motions are wise, and directed  
 by good Sense, we will ask him, how he distinguishes those that are such, from  
 others? If he judges by their Effects, so may we too; and I would willingly  
 ask him, Whether he can give us any better *Criteria* to help us in distinguishing  
 them, than these? That such Works are an Effect of Motions guided by Un-  
 derstanding, as discover a Regularity in them, and a Propriety or Fitness to  
 answer some End or Purpose; especially if we see a great Diversity in those  
 Works, and yet much Curiosity in them; in these Cases we are apt to judge  
 them to belong to some Masterly Hand. These are our Ways of Judging, when  
 we determine whether any Thing is a Work of Art contrived by such Intelli-  
 gent Beings as we confessedly are; or whether 'tis only a Quantity of Matter  
 heaped up without any kind of Order, and unfit to answer any particular Pur-  
 pose. These are the Rules by which we are willing to try the Works of Na-  
 ture, and the *Atheist* must be contented with them, unless he would give us a  
 Reason, Why in a Work of Art these shall be Indications of Thought and Con-  
 trivance, and none in a Work of Nature?

ALL that the *Atheist* says, comes to this, "That the Greatest and Best of  
 " all Beings, in the Religious Man's Opinion, is no Effect of Wisdom or Con-  
 " trivance; and therefore why must the World, which he believes the greatest  
 " and best of all Beings, be an Effect of any Thought or Design; altho' parti-  
 " cular Works do arise from the Agency of some Thinking Beings, That the  
 " Religious Man believes GOD to be the most Accomplished BEING, and yet  
 " that He owes not his Accomplishments to any Wisdom or Contrivance, but is  
 " Necessarily what He is; and therefore, Why may not the Curiosity in the  
 " Works of Nature be an Effect of Necessity, tho' less perfect Works, such as  
 " those of Art, be an Effect of Thought and Counsel."

LET us see then, whether the Evidence for the Frame of the World's pro-  
 ceeding from Necessity, be sufficient to out-weigh the Evidence for its being the  
 Contrivance of some Intelligent Being. And since the only Argument he brings  
 against the Appearances of Thought and Intelligence in the Works of Nature,  
 is, that the Frame of the World *may* be the Necessarily-existent Being: If I can  
 shew, That there is no Ground for such a Supposition, that the Appearances  
 of Nature do argue the Cause of them to have acted arbitrarily, and disposed of  
 Matter with the utmost Freedom, it must then follow, that if there be any  
 Thing like Wisdom or Contrivance in the Fabrick of the World, these, and  
 not Necessity, are the true Causes of it. I will therefore shew,

1<sup>st</sup>, THAT the Frame of the World cannot have its Existence from Ne-  
 cessity.

2<sup>dly</sup>, THAT there are plain Signatures of Wisdom and good Sense in those  
 Parts of the World with which we are best acquainted; and therefore that it  
 must have been the Effect of some Wise and Intelligent Being.

1<sup>st</sup>, THAT the Frame of the World cannot have its Existence from a Ne-  
 cessity of Nature, and that for these two Reasons.

1<sup>st</sup>, BECAUSE no Compound Being (such as the World is) can have Ne-  
 cessary Existence.



*Gurdon.* 2dly, BECAUSE there are evident Marks of a free and arbitrary Disposal in  
 SERM. its Constitution: Such an arbitrary Disposal, I mean, as is consistent with good  
 X. Sense.

1st, BECAUSE no Compound Being (such as the World is) can have Necessary Existence.

THE *Atheist's* Argument, That as GOD is supposed by the Religious Man to be the most Accomplished of all Beings in Point of Wisdom, and yet to be no Effect of Wisdom, that therefore there may be great Appearances of Wisdom without any original Cause of that Wisdom, will amount to no more than this; That there must be Something Wise and Intelligent from the Necessity of its own Nature, or without any Original Cause of its Wisdom. 'Tis agreed, That there must be such a Being, otherwise there could be no such Thing as Wisdom; but the Question between us and the *Atheist* is, What Sort of Being this must be; and whether Matter in its various Compositions, such as the Frame of the Universe is made up of, can be that Wise and Intelligent Being? and, Whether it could look so much like a Production of Wisdom and Contrivance as it does, if it were the real Parent of Wisdom, and owed that Wisdom to nothing but the Necessity of its own Nature? The BEING that the Religious Man supposes to be Necessarily-existent, is a most Simple BEING, and whose Nature is for that Reason not subject to Change or Alteration. The *Atheist's* Necessarily-existent Being, is a Compound one, a Being capable of receiving all manner of Changes, such as Matter and all its Compositions are; for *Spinoza* allows all the Modes of Being under which Matter appears (as well as the Substance of Matter abstracted from any particular Mode of Existence) to be the Necessarily-existent Being; and so must all who affirm the Frame of the World to be Necessarily-existent. But the Religious Person is persuaded, that a Compound Being, or any Being that is capable of receiving different Modes of Being, can never be reconciled with the Idea of Necessary Existence; because every Composition in a Compound Being may be conceived by us capable of being changed into some other, that shall be entirely different from what it was. And therefore no one Composition can be truly and properly Necessary; unless a Possibility of being or not being, were consistent with Necessity. *Spinoza* saw there was no avoiding the Force of this Reasoning, and that there was no defending Matter unless he could make her a Simple Being: And therefore he entirely alter'd the received Notion of its being divisible and changeable; tho' without Reason, as I have already proved\*; thinking it would be easier to persuade the World even to alter their Notion of Matter, than to make them believe that any Composition of Being could be a sufficient Support for Necessary Existence.

2dly, THE Frame of the World cannot be the Necessarily-existent Being, because there are evident Marks of a free and arbitrary Disposal in its Constitution, such an arbitrary Disposal, I mean, as is consistent with good Sense. If there was one uniform Appearance of Bodies in the Infinite Space, if all the Compositions of Matter were exactly of the same Bulk, and did all exactly describe the same Motions; there would be an Appearance that would much better resemble Necessity, than the present Face of Things; though even this would not prove these Magnitudes, and these Motions to be necessary; because there might be conceived very different Combinations of Matter floating in an infinite Space, very different Lines of Motion, and yet equally uniform; therefore none of them could be absolutely necessary: because, as I have already proved, whatever exists from a Necessity of Nature, cannot be conceived to be any Thing but what it is. But the present Face of Things has all imaginable Variety; instead of one vast System consisting of a great Number of uniform Bodies with a Sun at the Centre of it, we have probably a prodigious Number of Systems, as many as there are fix'd Stars, with such a Star, as we have a Sun, at the Centre of each of them; and yet we can see nothing in the Nature of Matter that should determine it into this great Diversity of

\* See Sermon IV.



Systems, rather than into one. The System of which our Earth is a Part might have been different from what it is, it might have been bigger or less than it is, as Space is infinite, and nothing but Will and *Pleasure* can be a Reason of the Dimensions of *ours*, or of any other System. No other Reason can be given for the particular Number of Planets, and of their different Magnitudes in this System; nor why some of them have more, others fewer, *Satellites* attending upon them; and if we were as capable of Judging of any of the other Systems, as we are of our own, we should probably find great Differences in all these Respects from ours; but to confine ourselves to our own of which we have some Knowledge, we will consider the different *Orbits* in which the Planets and Comets of our System move; the one move in *Elliptical*, the other in *Parabolical* Figures: 'Tis evident, that the moving Force, impress'd upon Bodies that describe such different *Orbits*, must be different too; and 'tis as evident that such a Diversity can have no Foundation in Necessity; but must be resolved into the free Agency of some Being who thought fit to impress a greater Quantity of Motion, or more of the Projectile Force upon some Parcels of Matter than He did upon others.

Gurdon.  
SERM.  
X.

AGAIN, we must never look for a Reason in Necessity of the Earth's moving about its *Axis* in a Motion oblique to its *Æquator*; because we are sure that the most simple and the most obvious Motion had been in an *Orbit* that was parallel to it; and that its Motion upon the *Ecliptick* is a Deviation from that simple Motion; and therefore the *Atheist* ought to give a Reason why the Earth must needs have been of such an outward Form, or have such a Difference in its inward Contexture, as might be the Cause of the Obliquity of its Annual Motion to its Diurnal. But I am persuaded he will never find any thing like a Reason for it, till, with us, he looks for it in some Free and Intelligent Cause that was pleased to contrive it in this Manner. I do not pretend to say, That any Variation from the present Appearance of Things, would have been for the better. But that such a Supposition would carry with it no Repugnance to our Conceptions of Things, and that we cannot see any Reason for such a Diversity, unless we resolve it into the Will and Pleasure of some Being who made such Divisions of Matter, and give them such Motions, when Matter was equally susceptible of any other.

I KNOW *Spinoza* in the sixteenth *Proposition* of his *Posthumous Works*, would endeavour to account for all the Diversity in the World by Necessity, when he says, *Ex necessitate Divinæ Naturæ Infinita infinitis modis (hoc est, omnia quæ sub Intellectum cadere possunt) sequi debent.* That is, that all Possibility of Being must of Necessity flow from the Divine Nature; consequently all that Variety of Concretions, and Diversity of Motions, which we have instanced in as Arguments of Freedom, would be the Effects of Necessity; but let us see how he proves this; why, he refers us to his sixth *Definition* in the same Book, in which he defines GOD to be a Being that consists of an infinite Number of Attributes that are different from one another; from which Infinity of Attributes, by necessary Consequence, must arise an Infinity of Things infinitely varied in the Manner of their Existence. He does not tell us how a Simple Being may have many Attributes really differing from one another, nor whether these different Attributes are not beholden to Motion for their Existence, which would be supposing Matter to have been always in Motion, altho' we have already seen that *Spinoza* would never give an Answer to those who asked him, How it came into Motion? \* But to let that pass; supposing Matter to be infinitely moved, or in infinitely various Degrees, yet no one can give a Reason why this particular Variety of Beings should be more necessary than any other. For if every Possibility of Being must arise from the Motion of Matter infinitely varied, then the present Frame of the World must contain in it all that Variety which 'tis possible to conceive; and yet nothing is plainer than that the Mind of Man does conceive it possible, that the Order of Beings might have been diffe-



*Gurdon.* rent from the present one. And yet I would not have the *Atheist* quit his Ne-  
 S E R M. cessity to take up with Chance, as something that would be better qualified to  
 X. account for this Variety; because Chance is a Word that signifies nothing but  
 the Ignorance of him that makes Use of it, and can have no Signification nor  
 Use in a Philosophical Account of Things; for if the Motions of Matter be  
 not directed by a Free Being, they must be pure Mechanical Necessity, or ne-  
 cessary Consequences of Matter in Motion, which leaves no Room for *Epicu-  
 rus's* Fortuitous Concourse of Atoms.

HAVING now shewn, That the great Variety which appears in Nature could not proceed from Necessity, but must be the Effect of some BEING that acts with Freedom; it must be perfectly unreasonable to Doubt whether that Agent, who freely produced this Variety, be a Wise and Intelligent Being, if we can observe as strong Appearances of Thought and Contrivance in the Works of Nature, as we do in those Artificial ones which do confessedly owe their Birth to some Intelligent Beings. The Rules we have of distinguishing Works of Art from those which are merely the Effect of Chance or a blind Necessity, are these: That there be a Regularity in the Work, and a Firmness to answer some End or Purpose. Whenever we find these, we never hesitate in pronouncing them to be the Work of some Being that knew what he did, and why he did it. The *Atheist* himself, since his beloved Necessity will not help him out, must allow this to be a fair Way of proving the Wisdom of the MAKER of the World, or else be so Ridiculous as to believe that there may be such a Thing as Art without an Artificer. I shall therefore proceed to shew

2dly, THAT if we Judge of the World by the Rules now mentioned, we cannot avoid discovering many Signatures of Wisdom and good Sense in those Parts of it with which we are best acquainted. I am sensible this Argument has been so often and so thoroughly urged against the *Infidel* by many of those Learned Persons who have Preached these Lectures, that I should have entirely pass'd it over, but that it compleats the Proof of Unreasonableness upon the *Infidel*, if he defends himself by any Difficulties in Religious Belief; because the Difficulty himself lies under, will appear to be no less than that of Believing, that there is neither Thought nor Contrivance in a World, which every Body else sees to be most Artificial. However, what I have to say upon it, shall be in a few Words, by offering an Instance or two of Regularity in the Works of Nature, and plain Indications of Thought and Design in adapting those Works to certain Ends and Uses.

THE first Instance I shall mention, is, The Annual Motion of the Earth, by Means of which every Part of the Earth receives as proper Degrees of Heat for the Plants and Animals of that Part, as if this Motion had been contrived on Purpose by the best Understanding. As I have already shewn, that the Obliquity of the Earth's Annual Motion about the Sun, to its Diurnal one about its Axis, must have some Free Agent for the Cause of it, it being Nonsense to say, That this particular Obliquity was necessary, when there are so many other Degrees of Obliquity besides this particular one: I will now shew, That it must have for its Cause a Wise and Contriving BEING that saw the Consequences of every other Degree of Obliquity, and pitched upon this, as what would be fittest for the several Animals that were to be dispersed over the Face of the whole Earth. That some Degree of Obliquity would be more beneficial to the Inhabitants of this Earth in general than none, cannot be denied, without Denying that the different Seasons of the Year are a Benefit, or that those Plants and Animals that live near the *Poles* would fare as well, and receive as comfortable a Share of Heat, without a Summer as with one. For 'tis evident if its Annual Motion had been parallel with its Diurnal one, we must have wanted the Vicissitudes of the Seasons of Summer and Winter; if it had been much less oblique than it is, the Inhabitants near the *Poles* would have received little Benefit from the Summer; and if it had been much more oblique to the *Æquator* than it is at present, the Heat must have been much greater in the *Torrid Zone* than it is now. And if the Ancients thought it, such as it is, to be incapable of re-  
 ceiving



ceiving Inhabitants by Reason of the extream Heat, they would have had much more Reason for such a Belief upon an Increase of the Obliquity of the Earth's Annual Motion. But if no Declination at all, or any other Degree of it, that should differ *much* from what we have at present, must have been worse for the Plants and Animals in general than it is; we can have no Pretence to look any where for the Cause of this exact Contrivance of the Earth's Motion, but in the Fore-thought of some Wise and Intelligent BEING. He that will do otherwise, will find himself reduced to the Necessity of Asserting, with *Lucretius*, That the Eye was not designedly contrived for admitting the Rays of Light, nor the Ear for receiving the tremulous Motions of Bodies, tho' an Organ well fitted, for that Purpose, nor the Air, tho' a *Medium* well fitted, for conveying those tremulous Motions to it. And as the modern *Atheist* will confess this to be ridiculous upon the *Epicurean* Foot of Chance, so it will be equally ridiculous to affirm, that this particular Degree of Obliquity in the Earth's Annual Motion, (tho' there are so many other Degrees of Obliquity which our Earth might have been equally capable of receiving) was the Produce of a blind Necessity.

2dly, ANOTHER Instance I shall give of Fore-thought and Contrivance, is, the Natural Oeconomy of the World, by which a sufficient Provision is made for that vast Family of Animals that dwell upon the Face of the Earth. If we had found our Globe filled with a Variety of Animals, and the Quantity of Provision for Food and Maintenance no ways answerable to such a Number, or if there were Food enough, that those Animals had not Skill enough to find out such Food as would be proper for the Support of their Lives, we should judge aright, if we concluded they came here by Chance or Necessity. But if we find that nothing is wanting for the Support of so large a Family of Creatures as there are upon our Earth, such a Variety of several Sorts of Food as fully answers the Occasions of such different Kinds of Creatures, and that all these Kinds, whether living in the Air, the Water, or the Earth, have a great Sagacity in finding out each their proper Food, which is undeniably the Truth of the Matter; and was long ago taken Notice of as an Argument of Sense and Contrivance; \* we must confess, that there must have been some Understanding BEING that had computed what Quantity of Food would be necessary for their Maintenance, and had also furnished them with proper Instincts for finding out in a wide World such Food, and such Accommodations, as would be fittest for them; or if all this will not amount to a Proof of Fore-thought and good Sense, we must for ever despair of finding any such Thing, and must believe that a Fleet or an Army of Men may be as well provided with all Necessaries, so as nothing shall be wanting, whether we computed and proportioned the Supplies to the Number of the People, and the Time that either was to be out upon Duty; or whether no Consideration was had beforehand what would be needful for such Numbers, and for such a Time: But if this be ridiculous to the last Degree, we cannot but join with the † *Psalmist* in adoring and admiring God's Wisdom in the Contrivance of our Earth, were we find all well adjusted to the Occasions of the Creatures that were to inhabit it, and say with him, O LORD, how manifold are thy Works! in Wisdom has Thou made them all: The Earth is full of thy Riches. So is this great and wide Sea, wherein are Things creeping innumerable, both small and great Beasts. These wait all upon Thee: that Thou mayst give them their Meat in due Season: That Thou givest them, they gather: Thou openest Thine Hand, they are filled with Good. For we still see the same good Provision holding out for the Use of the Animal Race, without any considerable Diminution from what it was in the *Psalmist's* Days; tho' some Thousands of Years have passed since the *Psalmist* made this Observation, yet the Stock of Provisions has not failed, and the Eyes of all do still, as well as then,

\* Vide Tull. de Natura Deorum, Lib. II. p. 206. *Davies*. Pastum animalibus large & copiose Natura cum qui cuique aptus erat comparavit. And a little farther, Dedit eadem Natura belluis & sensum & appetitum, ut altero conatum haberent ad Naturales pastus capeffendos, altero secernerent pestifera a salutaribus. p. 207.

† Psal. civ. 24, 25, 27, &c.



*Gurdon. wait upon GOD, and He giveth them their Meat in due Season,* The Instances  
 SERM. of Wisdom and Contrivance are as many as the Things of the World; if we  
 X. cannot find out all the Uses they serve for, we should be so fair as to acknow-  
 ledge, That such Things may have proper Uses, tho' we know not what they  
 are. This I think is reasonable, so long as we cannot deny, that there are many  
 Things which do as regularly tend to a certain End and Purpose, as if they had  
 been formed and contrived for such an End by the best Understanding. In such  
 Case our not knowing the Uses of some Works of Nature, ought to pass for no  
 Proof of any Thing, unless it be of our own Ignorance; and we might as well  
 argue, that there is no Contrivance in the Works of human Art, because per-  
 haps, the Animals below us cannot discover our Intention in the Contrivance of  
 them, as that there was no Intention or Design in the Works of Nature, only  
 because we cannot always find what it was.

HAVING now, by the Help of Motion, Intelligence, and the Regularity  
 of the World, evidently proved, That there must be some Powerful, Wise, and  
 Intelligent BEING different from Matter, the *Atheist* must be contented to  
 come into the Number of those Persons which my *Text* was fitted for, who  
 professing themselves to be wiser and more knowing than others, were yet so un-  
 fortunate as to make no other Discoveries but that of their own Folly. For  
 whilst he pretends some Difficulties in Religious Belief, as the Reason of his  
 leaving us, he is, as I have already shewn, contented to take up with much  
 greater ones in avoiding them, and can give no tolerable Account of the most  
 remarkable *Phænomena* in Nature, such as Motion, Intelligence, and the regular  
 Variety that appears in the Universe; and therefore must have suffered himself  
 to be byass'd by Prejudices while he was examining the Question in dispute be-  
 tween us; the Consequence of which will be, That he cannot secure himself  
 from the Apprehensions of Punishment from the Hands of *That GOD*, whom  
 he has wilfully denied. For I have already shewn, That a Man may be cul-  
 pable for his Errors and Mistakes, if he has not taken due Care to avoid them,  
 but has suffered himself to be sway'd by any Passion or Inclination, or any other  
 Motive besides a sincere Love for the Truth \*. The only Refuge he has left  
 must be this; That tho' there be a Wise and Powerful BEING, that at first  
 created, and does still govern and direct the *Natural* World, yet he sees no  
 Reason for believing, that He has any Regard to the *Moral* World, to the Vir-  
 tues and Vices of Men, or to their Religious Behaviour here; that there is no  
 such Things in Nature as Virtue and Vice, Honesty and Baseness; or if there  
 be, that GOD will take no Notice of them. What Grounds there are for such  
 a Supposition, will be considered in the following Discourse.

\* Sermon II.



# S E R M O N XI.

ISAIAH v. 20.

*Wo unto them that call Evil Good, and Good Evil; that put Darknefs for Light, and Light for Darknefs; that put Bitter for Sweet, and Sweet for Bitter.*

**T**H E Persons here mentioned were not Speculative *Attheists*, but only very wicked Livers, that endeavoured to conceal their own bad Actions by the pretence of some good and laudable Design they had in their View; and would therefore pass them upon the World for Acts of Virtue and Goodness, whereas the really good Acts of others, by their Misrepresentation of them, pass'd for either Acts of Weakness or Wickedness. They were not hardy enough to deny a real Difference between Good and Evil, Light and Darknefs, Bitter and Sweet; they only endeavoured to put off their own Deeds of Darknefs, for such as would bear the Light, and the nicest Observation; and the Actions of their Adversaries, tho' they had never so fair an Appearance, for such as would not bear to be look'd upon, or abide the Test of a careful Inspection. Their *own* Acts of Injustice, how bitter soever to those who suffer'd by them, must be taken for Acts of Kindness, and the Effects of Sweetness of Temper; whilst the most indulgent and best natured Acts of other People shall pass with them for a bitter and malicious Design of Cheating and Ruining Men.

Gurdon.  
S E R M.  
XI.

'Tis true, the Character of these Men does not come up to that of our *Hobbist*; because tho' they did in Reality confound all the Distinctions of Moral Good and Evil; yet they did not offer to tell the World, as the *Hobbist*, with great Gravity pretends to do, That there was no Difference between Virtue and Vice; much less did they undertake a serious Defence of so monstrous a Proposition: But neither any sacred or profane Author would furnish me with a *Text* or a *Motto* that would exactly answer this Character of our *Hobbist*; because there was generally more Modesty in the World, before *he* made his Appearance in it. For *he* scorns to palliate his Faults, or to impose upon the World by making them pass for Virtues, but openly and aloud maintains, That there are no Faults, or any such Differences in Nature as those of Virtue and Vice, in the usual Meaning of those Words; and that nothing deserves such Names, but what is profitable or unprofitable, pleasant or unpleasant; that whoever talks of an unprofitable or unpleasant Good, or a profitable and pleasant Evil, talks Nonsense, has no Meaning in what he says, but utters mere Sounds without any Signification belonging to them.

I HAVE already shewn the Necessity of admitting a Wise and Intelligent BEING that concerns himself in the Government of the *Natural* World, in keeping up that Order which He at first designed, and does continually execute; there are many who profess to believe this true, and yet pretend, "That they cannot see the same Evidence for his concerning himself with the Behaviour of *Moral Agents*; and think that GOD does not mind which Way Things go in the *Moral* World; they are contented to believe that he has taken all proper Care in ordering and contriving the Motions of *Natural Agents*, and in seeing them fully executed according to his first Design; but that a *Moral Agent* having received from Him a Freedom of Acting as he pleases, when-



Gurdon. " ever he acts freely, he acts in pursuance of that Nature which He has given  
 SERM. " him, and his Actions are equally agreeable to him, whether properly Free or  
 XI. " Licentious, morally Good or morally Evil." The Reasons by which they  
 pretend to Support this Opinion, are these :

1<sup>st</sup>, " THAT they cannot see any Difference between Moral Good and  
 " Evil, Virtue and Vice." Or,

2<sup>dly</sup>, " IF there should be such a Difference, they are sure that God  
 " would not concern himself about the Behaviour of *Moral Agents*, because  
 " they cannot observe him making any Distinction by Rewards and Punish-  
 " ments, between the Observance or not Observance of what is called Moral  
 " Good."

As to the first of these: " They are persuaded that there is no such Thing  
 " in Nature as Virtue or Vice, but that 'tis merely the Fashion and Fancy of  
 " People, because it varies in different Countries, and at different Times:  
 " that Legislators have always made the Publick Utility, such as it appeared  
 " to them, the only Rule of their Laws. This they think cannot be doubted;  
 " because when 'twas believed that the Publick might be better served by the  
 " Breach of a Law of Moral Honesty, they made no Scruple of encouraging  
 " the Subject, to break it. Consequently, Utility is the only Rule whereby to  
 " judge of Moral Honesty: And therefore no such Thing as Moral Good,  
 " when it differs from the Natural Good; but it loses its Nature from the  
 " Time it ceases to be profitable, and becomes Evil or Unprofitable. Which  
 " shews Honesty or Virtue, when deserted by Utility, to be an empty Name  
 " that has no Existence in Nature, and a fit Subject for none but a *Stoick*,  
 " who knew little of Nature, and was always talking against it, to spend his  
 " Time upon."

BUT for all this Objection, the Religious Man affirms Virtue to be Vir-  
 tue in Adversity, even when the Practice of it is Unprofitable to us; and  
 Vice to be Vice, tho' we outwardly thrive and seem to be Gainers by it. And  
 for these Reasons:

1<sup>st</sup>, BECAUSE if we suppose the Existence of Intelligent Beings, such  
 Beings I mean, as can compare one Thing with another, and *understand* as  
 well as *feel* Differences, the different Circumstances of Persons will necessarily  
 make a Difference in the Character of their Actions, with regard to the Judg-  
 ment of such Intelligent Beings.

2<sup>dly</sup>, BECAUSE those who have considered the Nature of human Actions  
 with the most Care, such as Philosophers and Legislators, have built their Rules  
 and Laws upon the Supposition of there being such a Difference in Nature.

3<sup>dly</sup>, BECAUSE those who least of all observe Moral Differences in their  
 Practice, but referr all to Pleasure or Profit, cannot but confess a Difference  
 in some Cases.

1<sup>st</sup>, BECAUSE so long as there are such Intelligent Beings, as can compare  
 one Thing with another, and *understand* as well as *feel* Differences; the diffe-  
 rent Circumstances of Persons will necessarily make a Difference in the Cha-  
 racter of their Actions, with Regard to the Judgment of such Intelligent Beings.  
 The great Fallacy of the *Hobbist's* Argument lies in this: That they consi-  
 der a Man only as capable of receiving the Ideas of Pleasure and Pain, Con-  
 venience or Inconvenience, without considering him as a Rational Being that  
 by comparing one Thing with another, and observing how far they agree, and  
 wherein they disagree, may take Notice of other Differences, which his Rea-  
 son assures him to be as real as those of Pleasure and Pain, Convenience and  
 Inconvenience. That the Animals inferior to Man discover nothing in the Na-  
 ture of Things beyond the Pleasure and Pain they receive from them, may be  
 probable enough; because we do not find they have such a Power as Man  
 has, of comparing their Ideas with one another, and of forming Complex  
 ones, such as are those concerning Moral Truths; or of forming general Pro-  
 positions from any reflex Act of the Mind upon particular Things; but to an  
 Intellectual Being furnished with such Powers of Mind, which Man confes-  
 sedly

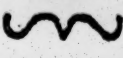


sedly is, we affirm that there must appear to be what we call *Moral* as well *Gurdon*. as *Natural* Differences antecedent to all positive Laws made concerning them; S E R M. XI. because the different Circumstances of Things and Persons must necessarily make a Difference in *human* Actions, altho' the Material or Natural Action considered by itself, and without Regard to those Circumstances, be exactly the same. For it cannot be denied that different Circumstances will necessarily so far alter the Nature of any Action, as to give it a different Character; as for Instance, The Action by which we put an End to a Man's Life, may be varied very much by the Circumstances of the Person whose Life we take away; as, Whether he be an innocent Man, or whether I had been much obliged to him, or there were none of these Considerations, but I did it for preserving my own Life; tho' the Action be the same in either Case, considered as the taking away the Life of a Man, yet sure every one must see a Difference between taking away another Man's Life for the Preservation of his own, and taking it away from a Man that has done him no Hurt at all, nor given any Indication of any such Intention; much more, if he has always been a great Benefactor and a Friend to him. These Differences in Cases, Reason by distinguishing Circumstances does discover to us; and so long as there are such Rational Agents as Men, Reason will make such Discoveries, let the *Hobbist* wink as hard as he pleases. And we have a remarkable Proof of it in *Vaninus*, who gave stronger Evidence of his being a sincere *Atheist*, than any of the Brother *Atheists* since have cared to give us; for tho' he might have saved his Life by renouncing those Atheistick Opinions he was charged with, yet he chose rather to die than to do so mean and unworthy an Act, as to deny or disown what he himself believed to be true. *Atheist* as he was, he could not avoid giving his Testimony against our *Hobbist*, and acknowledging, "That a Man may be in such Circumstances of Life, as shall make him guilty of a base and dishonest Act in saving his own Life." And therefore that there may be such Things in Nature as Honour and Honesty, Baseness and Cowardice, abstracting from all Considerations of Pleasure and Profit. The labouring a Point so plain as this, might look like a Misrepresentation of our modern *Atheist*, if Mr. *Hobbs* had not told us \*, "That all the natural Right God has to our Obedience, is founded upon this; That his Power is infinite, and that all our Obligations to obey Him in Virtue of the Law of Nature, arise from this, that his Power is irresistible." The Consequence of which must be, That in a State of Nature we can be under no Obligation to Him or any other Being on account of Justice or Gratitude for the Benefits of Creation, and Preservation of our Beings; or for any other Reason, but only this plain one, That we cannot help it. I cannot see any Thing the *Hobbist* can with any tolerable Shew of Sense answer to the Arguments I have already urg'd against him, unless it be, That our conceiving such Moral Differences in human Actions, will not prove their real Existence in Nature; as the Mind of Man is capable of forming Complex Ideas, that have no Existence out of the Mind; and that Moral Differences must be such, because if they had a real Existence in Nature, there could be no more Dispute about them, than there is about Pleasure and Pain. But our Answer is, That the Cases are not parallel; because Pleasure and Pain are felt and judged by our Senses, without any Want of Reflection to assure us of their Difference, and therefore all Persons whether wise or unwise, are equally affected by them; but the Beauty of Virtue, and the Deformity of Vice, will require some Degree of Reasoning from us, if we would discover them; and yet this Reasoning of ours does not make these Differences, but finds them what they are in Nature. For no Man sure will allow it to be a good Argument to prove there is no such Thing in Nature as Symmetry and Proportion, because all Persons are not equally affected by them, or because some Persons shall admire that which has neither Justness nor Elegance. And why then should it be an Argument against the Difference between Virtue and Vice, that all Persons

\* Hobbs, De Cive, p. 260, 262.



Gurdon. are not equally sensible of the Beauty of one, and the Ugliness of the other;  
 SERM. but that some shall have so corrupted a Taste, as to see as much Beauty in the

XI.  one as the other? The internal Characters of Mind, as well as the external Proportions of Body, will continue to be what they are, notwithstanding any wrong Judgments we may make of them; for the Nature of Things is inflexible, whatever Thoughts we entertain of them. What the Author of the *Characteristicks* has said on this Occasion is very just, in these Words: "Should a Writer upon *Musick* (addressing himself to the Lovers of that Art) declare to them, that the Measure or Rule of Harmony was Caprice or Will, Humour or Fashion, 'tis not very likely he should be heard with great Attention, or treated with real Gravity; for Harmony is Harmony by Nature, let Men judge ever so ridiculously of *Musick*; so is Symmetry and Proportion founded still in Nature, let Mens Fancy prove ever so barbarous or Gothick in their Architecture, Sculpture, or whatever other designing Art: 'Tis the same Case, says he, where Life and Manners are concerned, the same Numbers, Harmony and Proportion, have Place in Morals, and are discoverable in the Characters of Mankind\*." If this Author has Reasoned truly, the *Hobbiſt's* Denial of Moral Differences will be no better a Proof of their being no such Things in Nature, than ignorant Persons not discovering the just Proportions of any Work, would be a Proof that there is no such Thing in Nature as Proportion; for since there is and must be a wrong as well as a right Taste in judging of the internal Characters of the Mind, as well as of the Proportions and Figures of Bodies, the vitiated Taste of a *Hobbiſt* ought to pass for no better an Argument against Ethical Truth, than the Gothick Taste of an illiterate Person be taken as an Evidence against the Truth of any other Science.

2dly, THOSE who have considered humane Nature with the most Exactness, such as Philosophers and Legislators, have formed their Ethical and Political Schemes upon the Supposition of Moral Differences in Nature. And

1st, OF the Philosophers, there was none of them of any Note, without excepting even *Epicurus* himself, who did not agree in prescribing Virtue, as that which would best of all alleviate the Miseries that humane Nature is subject to, and, generally speaking, procure for it all that Happiness which it was capable of receiving. They all of them observed that there were two principal Motives of human Actions, *viz.* Reason and Appetite, together with all the Train of Passions accompanying those Appetites; they observed that these last did often incline us to pursue either improper Objects, or proper Objects in an improper or undue Manner; but that there was another Principle of human Actions, *viz.* Reason or good Sense; which when it prevailed and could be hearkned to, would direct what Objects ought to be courted, and in what Degree; that as the former Motive inclined us to take the Agreeable, as the Way to true Happiness, so this last discovered a more excellent Rule of Action. We cannot possibly mistake their Meaning, because we see the whole Design of their Ethical Treatises turned upon promoting the Influence of this Rational Principle, and because we find them always making Honesty or Moral Good, the Rule of this Principle, which is taking for granted, That the Happiness of Man, considered as a Rational Creature, was no otherwise attainable, but by hearkning to Reason, and that there was no Truth, Reason or good Sense, separate from Virtue. The *Stoicks* were so far from being of Mr. *Hobbs's* Opinion, that there was nothing in Nature but Pleasant and Unpleasant, Convenient and Inconvenient, that they would not allow these even a Share in making up human Happiness; but that the Happiness of Man consisted in his having so reduced his Appetites, as to be able to live without them; and to be contented with the τὰ ἐφ' ἡμῖν, by which they meant the Practice of Virtue, which was always in a Man's Power, as 'tis always in his Power to be an honest Man, tho' not to be a rich Man or at his Ease. Even the *Epicureans* themselves, who first pretended to make Men happy by rescuing them from the Fear of the Gods, and from the Restraints

\* *Characteristicks*, Vol. I. p. 353.



which Religion *then* laid upon them, were so far from taking off those Restraints which Virtue lays upon Men, that, as the Learned Dean of *Norwich* tells us, they acknowledged Virtue to be the only Way that leads to all that Happiness which the Life of Man is capable of receiving \*; and 'tis certain, the good Dean did not speak too favourable of them, if what *Laetius* says of *Epicurus* in his Life be true †. He owned, "There could be no such Thing as Pleasure, (in which he made the Happiness of human Life to consist,) "without Virtue. "That bodily Pleasures or Freedom from Pain, were among the τὰ ἄλλα, "which might be separated from Happiness; but Virtue was inseparable from "it: That Pleasure and Profit were Things of a changeable Nature, βρωτὰ, "such as were sometimes Good for a Man, and sometimes Evil, according to "the Discretion of the Man that enjoyed them; but Virtue was always Good for "him." So far was *Epicurus* from denying Moral Differences; which ought to shame our *Atheists*, who would subvert the original Nature of Things, in order to gratify their base Appetites; and therefore, as the before mentioned Learned Dean expresses himself ||, "Tho' our modern *Infidels* build their impious "Doctrines upon *Epicurus's* Philosophy; (they both agree to make all Things spring from Matter in Motion, without taking in a Powerful and Wise BEING to move Matter, and direct its Motion) "yet they cannot their immoral and "wicked Lives." And therefore must be inexcusable, while they pretend not to see any Difference between Virtue and Vice, tho' the Beauty of the one, and the Deformity of the other, were acknowledged by all those *Atheists*, who lived under a Religion in which Virtue and Vice were not near so truly described, as they are in our Christian Religion. But,

2dly, I AM to shew, That all Legislators or Founders of *Free-States* have supposed the Obligation to be just and honest, as the Foundations of their several Constitutions, and the best Supports of them. It cannot be denied that Legislators were Persons sufficiently qualified for Deciding this Question, as they are supposed to have been as well acquainted with the Springs of human Actions as any Persons whatever. That they took for granted there was such a Thing in Nature, as Moral Honesty, and believed that the World too was of the same Opinion, is evident from hence, That they depended more upon the Consent of the People than upon Force (the only Support of Tyrannical Governments) for the Preservation and Continuance of their Establishments: But every Body sees that the Consent of the People could never be a Foundation for a durable Society, unless they supposed the People prepossess'd with an Opinion, That this Consent of theirs once made, had laid them under an Obligation of continuing it; which they could have no Reason to believe, unless they supposed them under an Obligation of keeping their Word, even whilst they were in a State of Nature, or before they met together, and had given their Consent. The *Hobbiſt* supposes them obliged by Virtue of their Compact, but that antecedently to this Bargain made with their Governor, there was no Obligation upon any of them to be faithful or just: because there was no such Thing as Faith or Justice in Nature, the Obligation to Practice these being to be fetched entirely from the voluntary Agreement we made at our first entring into Society. But supposing the ancient Founders of States to be persuaded, as Mr. *Hobbs* pretended to be, That there was no such Thing as Faith or Justice, Breach of Promise or Iniquity, before the Laws of Societies had made such a Distinction in human Actions, they must see that Men would be no more obliged by any Consent they had given, or any Promises they had made, either to continue their Consent, or to make good their Promises, than if they had done nothing at all of either; for it would be impossible in the Nature of the Thing, that by any Act of theirs they should lay themselves under an Obligation, because such an Act would be made in a State of Nature, when 'tis supposed there was no Difference between

\* *Prideaux Connexion*. Part I. p. 434.

† *Ἐπίκουρος* καὶ ἀχαριστὸν φησὶ τῆς ἡδοῆς τὴν ἀρετὴν μόνον, τὰ δ' ἄλλα χωρίζεται οἷον βρώτα. Sect. 138.

|| *Ibidem*. Part I. p. 454.



*Gurdon.* Faithfulness and Unfaithfulness, breaking of Promises, and keeping them: And  
 SERM. therefore their Consent being given at a Time, when they were under no Ob-

XI. ligation of keeping their Word, they cannot be obliged to make good what  
 they had consented to. This is so evident, that had the Founders of *Free*  
*States* believed as Mr. *Hobbs*, they cannot be supposed weak enough to have  
 laid any Stress upon the Peoples Promises: but as we are sure they did, and  
 thought them the best Security of their Establishments, we cannot doubt whe-  
 ther moral Differences were acknowledged in their Times as Obligatory, even  
 before any positive Constitutions were made by them. And if Mr. *Hobbs* had  
 not been the worst Politician in the World, he would have kept his Thoughts  
 to himself, and not taken away the strongest Supports of those Societies, which  
 the Ancients thought to be the only Societies worth preserving; and left us the  
 Possibility of only *such*, as none that had either Courage or Honesty would care  
 to be concerned in.

BUT it may be said, That some of the ancient Legislators could not believe  
 there was any Justice or Injustice independent of positive Constitutions, because  
 they gave Impunity, and even Encouragement to the Breach of some Moral  
 Laws: an Instance of which is seen in *Lycurgus*, the *Spartan* Legislator, by  
 whose Laws a Licence was given to young People of robbing their Neighbours,  
 if they could do it without being discovered; and this Licence was given by  
 him as a Means of sharpening the Wits of the *Spartan* Youth, and making  
 them fitter for Out-witting their Neighbouring States: Here it should seem  
 that Equity and Honesty were forced to give way to an Appearance of Publick  
 Utility.

IN Answer to this Objection, we say, That the making Laws concerning  
 Property, is making Laws concerning a Thing which is allowed to be of a  
 Changeable and Positive Nature. And as no Body doubts, that a Legislator  
 may take away Part of a Man's Property for the Support of the Publick; so  
*Lycurgus* might think it lawful or equitable for him, without offending against  
 the Eternal Rules of Right and Wrong, to subject the Properties of particular  
 Persons to such an Inconvenience as this, for obtaining what he imagined would  
 be a Publick Service. But,

2dly, THE last Act of *Lycurgus* before he left *Sparta*, evidently shews that  
 he was fully persuaded of the Obligation of one Law of Nature, *viz.* Of per-  
 forming a Religious Promise, at least, he believed that the People of *Sparta*  
 were universally of that Opinion: for in order to make his Laws perpetual, as  
*Plutarch* tells us\*, He gathered all the People together, and persuaded them to  
 bind themselves by an Oath not to alter his Laws, till he should return again;  
 which he never intended. This would have been a very weak Contrivance, un-  
 less he supposed the *Spartans* thought themselves obliged by their Promises.  
 For if there was no Difference in Nature between keeping one's Word, and  
 breaking it, there would be no Reason to fear the Displeasure of the Gods for  
 doing what was in its own Nature indifferent; and therefore he could not be so  
 weak a Man, as to believe they would observe their Oaths when he was gone,  
 if he had not been well assured that his *Spartans* did universally believe there  
 was such a Thing as Faith and Honour, before he had given them a Being by  
 his Laws.

3dly, THOSE who least of all observe Moral Differences in their Practice,  
 and referr all to Pleasure or Profit, cannot but confess a Difference in some Cases;  
 for if they can have their Pleasure or Profit as well by observing the Rules of  
 Equity, as otherwise, there are Few that would not choose to have them in an  
 honest Way; scarce any Man of the most vitiated Taste, would choose to have  
 what he wished for by injuring his Neighbour, if he might have it as well with-  
 out hurting him. If at any Time there have been particular Persons that have  
 wantonly injured their Fellow-Creatures, they have been wont to pass under the  
 Character of Monsters. The Unbeliever ought to assign some Reason of this

\* *Plutarch in Vita Lycurgi.*



constant Appearance in Behalf of what we call Virtue; for if the Reason of *Gurdon*. this *Phænomenon* is to be drawn from hence, Either that the Reason of Man S E R M. discovers, even to the most vicious Person, a Fitness and Unfitness of Things XI. abstracted from Pleasure and Profit, and which he cannot avoid taking Notice of when his own Pleasure and Profit are not concerned; or that there is an Inclination in the human Species which moves it to Acts of Benevolence and Good-nature, when not checked by private Interest; which ever of these be assigned as the Cause of this Appearance, it will still be a strong Proof of a Difference in the Nature of Things. For if Rational Creatures in Virtue of their Reason discover any such Things, they must have as good a Foundation in Nature as the Reason of Rational Agents; or if Inclination leads them to such a Behaviour, so long as this Inclination appears to be almost Universal, admitting very few Exceptions, nothing less than the Nature of Things can be a Cause sufficient of so regular and extensive an Effect.

T H E R E is one other Difficulty, which is sometimes raised against the Proof of Moral Differences, which is, That granting such Differences do indeed appear to us, yet they may not appear *such* to the Supreme, Intelligent B E I N G; that is, That Truth, Justice and Goodness, may appear otherwise to G O D than they do to us Men: and they pretend to support this Opinion of theirs, in this Manner: That the Nature and Perfections of G O D are Incomprehensible, his Ways are in the Deep, and his Footsteps not known; and therefore what may be just and equitable in our Opinions, may not be so according to the Judgment He forms of Things; consequently, the *Infidel* will say, Let it be never so certain that some Things do appear to us Morally Good, others Evil; yet till it appears that G O D judges of them as we do, we may still be safe, altho' we do not practice agreeably to those Differences as apprehended by us. And they pretend to be confirmed in this Belief, because they cannot see G O D making any visible Distinction between Good and Bad Men.

In Answer to the first Part of the Objection, we say, That how incomprehensible soever the Nature of the Supreme B E I N G, and his Manner of Thinking, may be to us, yet as we have proved, That the Morality of human Actions is founded upon the Nature of Things, upon the Fitness or Unfitness which Things evidently appear to us to have in their Relation to each other, if we could be supposed to mistake when we judge according to such Evidence, and that Things appeared quite different to G O D than they did to us, it would be best for us to leave off Reasoning upon any Kind of Truth whatever, and content ourselves, as some of the Antients did, with the bare Appearances of Things. For if those Relations of Things which are the Foundation of Moral Differences, appear to us with as strong an Evidence, as any Thing of whose Nature and Existence we think ourselves most assured, we must then believe them to be really such as they appear to us, or else be contented to doubt of every other Kind of Truth, as well as Religious Truth. And then the *Atheist's* Safety will lie in this; That Men are always deceived: Which may be true enough with Regard to himself and his Friends, while they mispend their Time in accounting for Things by Chance or Necessity; but I am persuaded the rest of the World will conclude that Cause to be a very bad one, which cannot be defended without giving up the Truth of our Faculties. For let there be never so much Difference between the Perfection of G O D's Knowledge and that of ours; yet 'tis plain, our Knowledge, as far as it reaches, must be real; or else there will be no such Thing as human Knowledge.

A s to the second Part of the Objection, That G O D makes no visible Distinction of Good and Bad Men; which they think a good Proof, that He does not judge of Good and Evil as we do: In Answer to it, I will shew,

2dly, T H A T G O D may have such Apprehensions of Virtue and Vice as we have, (abating for the Difference between a perfectly Wise B E I N G, and a Being whose Knowledge reaches to few Things) and yet not make any greater Distinction between the Good and the Bad, than what we see at present. The

*Infidel,*



*Gurdon.* *Infidel*, as I have already proved \*, cannot be sure that he shall not continue to  
 SERM. Think after he is dead, and be conscious too of his being the same Thinking

XI. Person he was ; and therefore he can never be sure that this Life is not a State  
 of Probation for another ; and then he may be a Sufferer afterwards, tho' not  
 now, by his Infidelity. For it is not at all inconsistent with the Notions we have  
 of Holiness, that a Holy BEING should permit Wickedness to thrive for a  
 Time, and Goodness to be the Sufferer, supposing a Time to come when the  
 Good and Bad shall be visibly distinguished by Rewards and Punishments ; un-  
 less any Man could prove it inconsistent with Goodness to make a Trial of the  
 Behaviour of Free Agents, (which no Body I think will offer to say.) For 'tis  
 certain an exact Discrimination of the Good and the Bad by Rewards and  
 Punishments, would not be consistent with any State of Probation : if the Wick-  
 ed constantly met with Vengeance from Heaven for Acts of Wickedness, who  
 would dare to be wicked ? And what Merit in being otherwise ? Which is Rea-  
 son enough for a Good BEING's not making any such Difference, altho' there  
 be a real Difference between Virtue and Vice, and altho' this Difference appears  
*such* to the Supreme BEING as it does to *us*. We ought rather to judge from  
 GOD's making no Distinction at present between Good and Bad Men, that He  
 intends to do it some other Time. That 'tis only delayed for the present, be-  
 cause such a Distinction would not serve the Purposes of trying how Free Agents  
 would behave themselves ; but that when the Time of Trial should be over,  
 which will be at our leaving this World, that then Virtue should meet with  
 that Happiness that naturally belongs to it, and Vice the Evil and Misery which  
 are its proper Portion. These are such necessary Consequences from the dif-  
 ferent Natures of Good and Evil, and from their being apprehended as such by  
 the Supreme BEING, that 'tis as impossible that it should be otherwise, as that  
*Bitter* should have the same Effects as *Sweet*, or *Sweet* as *Bitter* ; *Light* as  
*Darkness*, or *Darkness* as *Light* : And therefore GOD's Forbearance of Sinners  
 at present, is no reasonable Ground for the *Atheist* to build any such Hopes  
 upon, as tho' it must *always* fare as well with him, as it does *now*.

\* See Sermon IX.

SERMON



# S E R M O N XII.

JOHN xv. 24.

*If I had not done among them the Works which none other Man did, they had not had Sin.*

**I**N the foregoing Discourse I proved, That the Behaviour of such a Moral Agent as Man, could not be indifferent in the Sight of G O D, because there is a real Difference in the Nature of Things between some of our Moral Actions, and others of them, between those we call virtuous, and the vicious ones: and that such a Difference must appear to the Supreme B E I N G. The Consequence of which will be, That it concerns every Man that has a Regard to his own Welfare, to inform himself what Behaviour will be most agreeable to H I M; and what will be displeasing to H I M. And as he has heard of many Persons who pretend to have received Instructions from Heaven, in order to tell Men what Behaviour G O D would require at their Hands, to examine, Whether there be not Truth in the Pretensions of some or other of them.

**I**N Answer to this, the *Infidel* says, " He has no Reason to concern himself in any Pretensions to Revelation, because he is persuaded,  
1<sup>st</sup>, " T H A T there can be no rational Proof given of any Revelation from Heaven.

2<sup>dly</sup>, " T H A T if there were any Means of proving, that a Person had received Authority from G O D to discover some Truths to Mankind, that all such Discoveries would be useless or unnecessary; and therefore cannot come from G O D, because He does nothing in vain, or without great and good Reasons.

3<sup>dly</sup>, " B E C A U S E there have been so many Pretences to Revelation, and all of them pretending to have been supported by the extraordinary Power of G O D, that there is no finding which of them is the true one, if any such were."

As to the first Argument against Revelation, " That there can be no Rational Proof made of any Revelation from Heaven; they support it thus: That the Nature or Goodness of the Doctrine which a Man pretends to have received from Heaven, will never of itself prove its Extraction to be from thence; because the same good Doctrines have been taught by those who never pretended to any Revelation, as well as by those that did; and therefore that the only Means left of proving a Person to be a Teacher commissioned from Above, must be his doing some uncommon Works in Proof of his Commission, which cannot possibly be done by any Powers that are lodged in Nature; by the mere Power of Man, or of an Agent inferior in Power to G O D himself." But the *Spinosist* says, " That extraordinary and uncommon Works are as much the Effects of some Powers of Nature, tho' unknown to us, as those that are the most common, and for that Reason better known to us; consequently, whenever they happen, they will never prove that the Person by whom they seem to be done, was impowered by G O D. That the Argument here used by our S A V I O U R to prove his Divine Mission, drawn from the uncommon Works He had done among them, as being more and greater



Gurdon. " than any other Person had pretended to before him, might be a good Argu-  
 SERM. " ment to the *Jews*, and make them worthy of Blame in not accepting Him  
 XII. " upon such an Evidence, because they must acknowledge such uncommon  
 " Works to be a good Proof of a Divine Mission, their Religion being found-  
 " ed upon such Kind of Works; That *Origen* himself thought our SAVIOUR  
 " chose to come among the *Jews* rather than any other Nation, because they  
 " having been used to Miracles, would be more easily convinced by comparing  
 " our SAVIOUR'S Works with what they had heard of\*. But that in them-  
 " selves they really prove nothing but our Ignorance of the Powers of Nature;  
 " and therefore can never prove, to a Person not prepossess'd in Favour of  
 " Miracles, that GOD is any more concerned in producing them, than He is  
 " in any the most common Appearances of Nature." For *Spinoza* plainly places  
 miraculous Facts to the Account of Mens Ignorance of the Works of Nature, in  
 these Words: *Miracula & ignorantiam pro æquipollentibus sumpsi*. And he gives  
 this Reason for his making Miracles and Ignorance to be equivalent Terms;  
*Quia ii qui Dei Existentiam & Religionem miraculis adstruere conantur, rem ob-*  
*scuram per aliam magis obscuram & quam maxime ignorant (viz, the Powers*  
*of Nature) ostendere volunt, atque ita novum argumentandi genus adferunt, re-*  
*digendo scilicet non ad impossibile, ut aiunt, sed ignorantiam†.* That is, " We  
 " pretend to prove the Truth of certain Propositions, of which we can judge  
 " by our Reason, by certain wonderful Facts of whose Causes we are not able  
 " to judge at all, and therefore must be less known than the Propositions  
 " which they are intended to prove." From thence he infers, " That Mira-  
 " cles, the Causes of which are unknown to us, can never be a Proof of any  
 " Thing, unless it were possible or allowable to enlighten an obscure Proposition  
 " by another that was equally or more obscure than itself." This is the chief  
 Difficulty by which the Unbeliever pretends to defend himself in not believing  
 any Thing of our Christian Revelation.

HOWEVER *Spinoza* being aware that he might be pressed with some ex-  
 traordinary Facts mentioned in the *Gospels*, such as raising *Lazarus* to Life,  
 after he must needs have been dead, having lain Four Days in the Grave; and  
 our SAVIOUR'S own Resurrection, after he had been known to be really dead  
 by vast Numbers of Persons, who were Spectators at his Crucifixion; and by  
 great Numbers who saw him alive after his Resurrection; that such Facts as  
 these seemed to exceed all the Powers of Nature, and therefore that Miracles  
 would not be, as he had supposed, an Argument whose Strength lay only in our  
 Ignorance of the Powers of Nature; He goes on to say farther, " That if  
 " some Facts be related in the *Gospels*, which do truly exceed all the Powers of  
 " Nature, such Facts were not real, but in Appearance only." *Oldenbourg* had  
 press'd him to declare what he thought of the Instantaneous Cures, and the re-  
 storing of dead Bodies to Life again, of which the Writers of the *Gospels* take  
 Notice, whether those could be the Effects of some occult Powers of Nature,  
 if really performed; or whether he thought they were to be taken in a figura-  
 tive Sense, or that the Relators of these Facts intended to impose upon us.  
*Spinoza* would not take Refuge in the last of these; but frankly owns, " That  
 " he could not deny them to be in earnest in the Accounts they had given us  
 " of these Extraordinary Works." The Air of Simplicity, and a plain Sincerity  
 which appears in their manner of Writing, extorted this Confession from him;  
 and therefore he grants in his Answer to *Oldenbourg* ||, " That the Disciples of  
 " our Lord were as fully persuaded that they saw their Lord after his Resur-  
 " rection, and at his Ascension, as they were of having ever seen Him during  
 " his Life-time; but that they were deceived in believing those Appearances of  
 " their Lord after his Death to have been real; or any thing more than Impo-  
 " sitions upon their Senses."

\* Contra Celsum. Lib. II. p. 95.

\* Διὰ τῆτο δὲ οἶμαι καὶ τὸ Ἰησοῦν εἶναι ἄλλω, ἔσθαι ἢ Ἰουδαίους ἐπιδημιολογῆσαι, τοῖς ἑσῶσι γενομένοις πρὸς τὰ παράδοξα, τῇ  
 παραδίσει τῇ πεπιστευμένῃ πρὸς τὰ ἴσα, αὐτὲ γενόμενα, κ, τ, λ.

† Epist. 23.

|| In eadem Epistola.



I WILL therefore shew 1<sup>st</sup>, That the Extraordinary Works related in the *Gospels*, supposing them for the present to have been really performed, would be a sufficient Proof of a Divine Mission. S E R M.  
XII.

2<sup>dly</sup>, THAT the Disciples of our LORD were well qualified for judging, whether some of these wonderful Works were *really*, and not in *Appearance only*, none; and consequently their Testimony concerning such Miraculous Facts, would be as credible a Testimony, as it would have been concerning any other Matters of Fact, of which we are able to assign a Natural Cause; and then a Revelation or Divine Mission may be made evident and credible to Men.

1<sup>st</sup>, THAT the Wonderful Works related in the *Gospels*, supposing them for the present to have been really wrought, would be a sufficient Proof of a Divine Mission.

BUT before I proceed to the Proof of this Proposition, it may not be amiss to shew the Possibility of such Works being done, as those our SAVIOUR appeals to in my *Text*, and yet of not being the Effects of some Powers of Nature. For those who deny the Authority of Miracles, do even deny the Possibility of them, when considered as Works done by some Power or other, superior to Nature, and acting freely upon Nature. But the Reason of their Denying them, is built upon a Supposition, which is a mere begging the Question in Dispute between us and the *Atheist*; viz. That GOD is a Necessary Agent, and therefore the Laws of Motion must be necessarily what they are; for then it would be true indeed, that all the Effects of those Laws would be equally natural, tho' perhaps not equally common, or coming so often under human Observation: And then such extraordinary Occurrences, when they happened, must be as much the Effects of the Powers of Nature as any of those that are most common. But we suppose, and have already proved, That the Motions of Matter are by no means necessarily such as they are; but depend upon an Intelligent and Free BEING, who moved Matter as He thought fit: And tho' He chuses an uniform Manner of acting upon Matter, according to what we call the Laws of Matter in Motion; yet there can be no Difficulty in conceiving that He may act otherwise if He pleases, as well as we can conceive that He might have at first impress'd different Powers upon Matter from the present ones; which cannot be doubted while the Principle of Gravitation that acts upon Matter, is not essential to it; for then 'tis plain, there can be no absolute Necessity in the Nature of Matter for its gravitating at all, much less for its gravitating according to these Laws, by which our Experience tells us it now does; and then there can be no Difficulty in conceiving that GOD may change them for a *short* Time as well as for a *long* one, which makes all the Difference between Miracles or Works produced only upon extraordinary Occasions, and such as are the Effects of the settled Course of Nature; for, according to the Religious Man's Scheme, the Laws of Nature are nothing more than certain Rules which GOD has freely proposed to himself, according to which He would usually act upon or move Matter; which shews there could be no Foundation for questioning the Possibility of Miracles, without taking it for granted that there was no such Thing as a Free Agent, or a Being that acts upon Choice. It being then not impossible that such Works should have been performed, as are related in the *Gospels* altho' they were not an Effect of any Natural Powers of Matter in Motion:

I COME now to shew that such extraordinary Works, supposing them to be done, will be a sufficient Proof of a Divine Mission; for these Two Reasons:

1<sup>st</sup>, BECAUSE they could not be the natural Effects of any Laws of Nature whatever.

2<sup>dly</sup>, BECAUSE they could not be done by any inferior Agents independently of GOD: For the only Reasons that can be possibly given, why the Extraordinary Works related in the *Gospels*, should not prove, that the Person who appeared to work them, was empowered by GOD, and therefore sent by Him, must be either because these Works were as much the Effects of Natural Causes,

as



Gurdon. as any other not so much taken Notice of, because not so usual; or that they  
 SERM. might be performed by some invisible Agents superior in Power to Man, tho'  
 XII. vastly inferior to GOD.

1<sup>st</sup>, THERE is no Ground for supposing that the extraordinary Works related in the *Gospels*, as performed by our SAVIOUR, were the natural Effects of any Laws of Nature unknown to Men; because if they were such, no Reason can be given,

1<sup>st</sup>, WHY no more of them are produced. And,

2<sup>dly</sup>, BECAUSE supposing them to be so; yet how should our SAVIOUR come to the Knowledge of them? Since they are supposed to be unknown to Men.

1<sup>st</sup>, I say, That the Works we are told to have been done by our SAVIOUR, could not be the Effects of any Laws of Nature; because no Reason can be given why no more of them are produced. 'Tis certain, if we take in all the *pretended* as well as *real* Resurrections of dead Bodies, with which the History of Mankind will furnish us, that they are exceeding few in Number; and if we leave out those that want a due Attestation, their Number will be much smaller. That Nature should be many Hundreds of Years, I may say, many Thousands, in bringing forth the Resurrection of a dead Man; and yet that this should be as natural a Product of hers, as the Birth of a Man, which happens every Day, is what no Body sure can be persuaded to believe. As natural as the common Way of propagating Mankind is, yet if there had been very few Instances of its Success in many Ages, we should scarce have judged the Productions in that Way a Work of Nature; because there is no supposing any Thing to be the real Cause of an Effect, when it scarce ever produces that Effect. 'Tis not doubted that a real Cause may be sometimes defeated by the contrary actings of other Causes; but that it should be almost always so, is what can never be reconciled with those Signatures of Wisdom and Contrivance, which appear in all those Parts of Nature, with which we are best acquainted\*. And tho' the *Atheist* will not allow them to be the Products of an Intelligent BEING, yet he will not deny that there is any Regularity in the Productions of Nature, or that generally speaking, natural Causes do produce their proper Effects; but no Body will say there can be regular Productions, when the Causes of those Productions shall fail a Million of times for once succeeding.

I DO not deny that many natural Effects may have pass'd upon the World for Prodigies, because Men have not been always careful in observing the Workings of Nature, and that more accurate Inquiries have justly enough thrown many of them out of the Number of such Works as exceeded its Power: That many Things, if seldom taken Notice of, have pass'd upon the World for Prodigies or super-natural Effects in some illiterate Ages, which are now accounted for by the ordinary Laws of Nature. But then 'tis also to be considered, that it has not been for Want of observing the Nature of *dead* Bodies, that the Resurrection of such Bodies has pass'd for a Prodigy, but because Men were well assured by a continued Observation of them, that it was not the Nature of *such* Bodies to spring out of their Graves, as Corn does out of the Ground; and because in all their Observation and Reading, they had met with exceeding few Instances of this Nature, and therefore rightly judged, that *Nature* was not qualified for making dead Carcasses to spring out of the Ground. For whatever occult Qualities there may be in the Nature of Things, yet they might easily see that if any Thing fell out directly contrary to the constant and settled Course of Things, or that a *dead* Body should become a *living* one, instead of a *living* Body becoming a *dead* one, that this could not be a mere Effect of the Laws of Nature; but must have some Cause superior to those Laws, that was able to act upon Matter in a different Manner from what was usual. Some Cause that had chosen to act for the most Part upon Matter in an uniform Manner, and yet reserved to itself a Liberty, upon some Occasions, of departing from that Rule. But,

\* See Sermon X.



2dly, SUPPOSING some of those Extraordinary Works which seemed to *Gurdon*.  
 be done at our SAVIOUR'S Command, because they appeared immediately *SERM.*  
 upon his Speaking, as in his Instantaneous Cures of Blind, Lame, and Sick *XII.*  
 People; supposing, I say, these to have been merely Effects of some secret Laws  
 or Powers in Nature, there still remains a great Difficulty in accounting for  
 these Miracles, and that is, How our SAVIOUR could know, when these  
 unknown Powers would exert themselves? He foretold before his Death,  
 That after he had been laid in his Grave, He should rise out of it the third  
 Day. Taking it for granted, that the Resurrection of a Man falls within the  
 Compass of the Powers of Nature, tho' unknown to us, because they seldom  
 appear, it would be natural to ask this Question, How our SAVIOUR could  
 know that the Laws of Nature would be ready to restore a dead Body to  
 Life again just at that Time when He had foretold He should rise again?  
 There had been Millions and Millions of Bodies, that had lain very quiet in  
 their Graves for many Ages, and no Historical Observations could possibly have  
 furnished our SAVIOUR with any Light, whereby to discover when Nature  
 would be strong enough to raise a dead Body; because the Instances must have  
 been too few to afford any Ground for forming a Judgment upon them. When  
 He raised *Lazarus* out of his Grave, it seems to be as impossible that he should  
 know that Nature would have Power to restore him to Life again just at that  
 Time when he called to him to come out of his Grave, as it would be for a  
 mere Man by his own Natural Powers, to restore a dead Body to Life again.  
 So again, What could have induced our SAVIOUR to have attempted the  
 giving Sight to a Person that had been blind from his Birth, had He trusted  
 to the Powers of Nature for the Success of that Operation? When there had  
 not been at that Time one Instance from the Creation of the World, of a  
 Person's Seeing that had been born blind: *Since the World began was it not heard,*  
*that any Man opened the Eyes of one that was born blind* \*. How our SAVIOUR  
 should be possess'd of a Piece of Knowledge which no Body has ever had either  
 before or since his Time, and is confess'd by the *Spinozist* to be a Secret which  
 he pretends not to fathom, is what he ought to give some Account of. Till  
 such Time, we have a Right to insist upon it, That those Instantaneous Cures  
 our SAVIOUR performed upon the Person born blind, upon the Dumb and  
 Deaf, upon the Sick of various Distempers, and even upon such as were really  
 dead, should be taken for some uncommon Exercises of the Power of GOD, and  
 not for any Natural Effects of certain Powers of Nature.

2dly, HAVING shewn that some Miraculous Works mentioned in our *Gospels*,  
 supposing them to have been really performed, could not be the Effects of any  
 Powers of Nature, I am now to shew, That such Works could not be performed  
 by any Agents inferior to GOD; and for this plain Reason, Because some of  
 them, as for Instance, the raising a Body to Life that has been once really dead,  
 requires as great a Power as the giving Life at first to such a Body. For, if we  
 can judge at all, it will require as great a Power to restore a Piece of Matter to  
 Life again, when that Organization is spoiled which was necessary to Life, tho'  
 it had been before animated, as to animate any Parcel of Matter, that never  
 had any of the Organs necessary for Life. And therefore the same Power, which  
 could re-animate a Body that was reduced to an inanimate State, would be suf-  
 ficient for animating any Part of Matter whatsoever. But whatever Extraor-  
 dinary Works may be done, whether *really* or in *appearance*, by any Invisible  
 Agents inferior to the Supreme BEING, yet so long as the *Deist* believes  
 him to be the Maker of the World, and of all Things that are contained in it,  
 he cannot believe any inferior Beings to have a natural Power, or a Power  
 independent upon GOD, of making any new Species of Animals, or of forming  
 any Individuals out of lifeless Matter, of the same Species with the present ones  
 of GOD'S making; because a Power lodged in any Hands different from those  
 of the CREATOR, of encreasing the Number of Animals in any other way

\* John ix. 32.



Gurdon. than of His appointment, would be inconsistent with the Oeconomy of the  
 SERM. World, and the Fitness of Provisions, both with Regard to the Quantity and  
 XII. Quality of them, for the Use of such Animals. For there is no conceiving  
 how there should be such an exact Adjustment of Provisions for the Animate  
 Part of the World, as I have already shewn there is\*, without supposing that  
 there was some Intelligent BEING, who had calculated what Quantity of Pro-  
 visions would be necessary for supplying the Wants of such a Number of Ani-  
 mals, as He intended should dwell upon the Face of the Earth. And it cannot  
 be supposed that GOD would furnish any of his Creatures with a Power of  
 disturbing his own Plan, and making it unbecoming his Wisdom to exe-  
 cute.

IF there have been any Instances pretended of the Exercise of such a  
 Power by inferior Agents without GOD's Assistance, because in Opposition to  
 Him; as in the Case of the *Ægyptian* Magicians, and of *Apollonius's* raising  
 a Lady to Life in *Rome* when she was carrying to the Funeral Pile:

I ANSWER, That as to the Instance of the Magicians, there is no Evidence  
 that their Performances were more than Delusory or in Appearance: The Works  
 which they did, as well as *Moses*, were these Two; the turning their Rods into  
 Serpents, and bringing Frogs upon the Land of *Egypt*: These are the only  
 Wonders performed by the *Ægyptians*, that have any Pretence to the making  
 any of the *Animate* Kind: And yet neither of these Instances will prove, that  
 they had a Power of giving Life to Lifeless Matter. For as to the first, viz.  
 the Conversion of their Rods into Serpents; we have no Reason to think that  
 this was a real Change or Conversion into a living Creature; because we find  
 that *Aaron's* Rod, after it had been at two different Times converted into a  
 Serpent; this same Rod, I say, was ever after called by the Writer of the Book  
 of *Exodus*, a Rod or Wand, and employed to the Purposes of a Rod †, *The*  
*Rod which was turned into a Serpent, shalt thou take in thine Hand*; and Verse  
 17, 'tis employed as a Rod to smite upon the Waters; Chap. viii. 16. it was used  
 in smiting the Dust of the Land. So as after it had been twice a Serpent, it  
 resumed its primitive Nature of a Rod, and this too without the Help of any  
 miraculous Change, as far as appears by the History; and seems to have conti-  
 nued in that State ever after. But however it might have been with *Aaron's*  
 Rod, yet had the Magicians Conversion of *their* Rod into a Serpent, been a real  
 Change, it would be hard to give a Reason, why they were not able to form  
 Lice out of the Dust, as well as a Serpent out of their wooden Wand: For  
 as to the first of these, the Magicians immediately cry'd, as soon as they saw it,  
*That it was the Finger of GOD*, and did not pretend to any Thing like it.  
 And yet no Body will pretend to see more Difficulty in animating Dust than in  
 giving Life to a Piece of dead Wood.

As to the second Instance, the Scriptures say nothing of Frogs being made  
 by the Incantations of the Magicians, but only that they brought them out of  
 the Water upon the Land; which certainly may be done without the Power of  
 forming such Animals as Frogs. The last Instance is that of *Apollonius* of  
*Tyana's* raising a Lady to Life that had been carried out for dead. The Account  
 which *Philostratus* gives of it, tho' he was well inclined to do all the Honour  
 he could to *Apollonius*, shews it to be very doubtful, whether the Lady was  
 really dead or only in a Trance. "For, says he, whether there was any Spark  
 " of Life left in her, which her Physicians did not perceive, or whether she  
 " was really dead, is a Matter of Doubt not only to me, but was such to those  
 " who were present when *Apollonius* seemed to bring her to Life again†." And  
 therefore this Instance, any more than the former, will never have Weight  
 enough to prove, that any inferior Agents have a Power, independent of GOD,  
 of giving Life, or making new Individuals. Consequently, it cannot invali-

\* See Sermon X.

† Exodus, Chap. iv. and Chap. vii. v. 15.

† Εἴτε ἀπὸ τῆς ψυχῆς εἶεν ἡ ἀνίσταται, ὥς ἐλεγχέται τὰς θεραπεύσεις — Εἴτε ἀπὸ τοῦ κελεύει τὴν ψυχὴν ἀνίστασθαι καὶ  
 ἀνίστασθαι. ἀλλὰ ἡ καὶ ἀλλήλην τὰς γέγονεν, ἐκ ἑμοῦ μόνου, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς παρασχεῖται. Philostrat. de vita Apollonii  
 Tyana. Lib. IV. cap. 45.



date my Proof of a Divine Mission drawn from the Exercise of such a Power as that of giving Life to a dead Body. Gurdon.  
SERM.  
XII.

IF we may believe Mr. Bayle\*, *Spinoza* himself acknowledged, if he could have believed the Matter of Fact of *Lazarus's* being raised to Life again, after he had been really dead, that he would have given up his System of Infidelity, owned our SAVIOUR'S Mission to have been from GOD, and embraced the Christian Faith. Mr. Bayle tells us, That *Spinoza* confessed this to some of his most intimate Friends. We cannot doubt whether *Spinoza* had heard of the Account that *Philostratus* has given of *Apollonius* raising a Roman Lady to Life; whether he believed any more of this than he did of our SAVIOUR'S raising *Lazarus* to Life; yet thus much may be inferred from this Confession of his, which is all I want it for at present, That if good Proof could be made of any such Fact, it would be a good Evidence of a Divine Mission.

HAVING finished the Proof of Miracles, and shewn, That some of the Works which our SAVIOUR is said to have done, could not be the Effects of any Powers of Nature, nor of any Agent inferior to GOD,

I AM to shew, 2dly, That the Disciples of our LORD were qualified for judging, Whether such Works were really done or not; particularly with Regard to his Resurrection, that they were able to judge, whether it was *Real*, or only in *Appearance*. For I cannot find that *Spinoza* doubted, whether the Apostles were sincere Persons, and spoke what themselves believed to be true. The Objection which *Oldenbourg* had made to him upon this Head, and his Answer to it, supposes him satisfied of their Sincerity: For thus he says\*, *At dices Apostolos omnes omnino credidisse, quod Christus à morte resurrexerit, quod ego non nego.* And he says farther†, "That the Circumstances of our Saviour's Appearing to his Disciples were so strong, that he does not only say, that they believed what they reported of his Appearing to them; but that even *Infidels* would have thought they had seen him, if they had been present in those Places in which He appeared to his Disciples." *Fateor quidem hanc viz. Resurrectionem, iis narrari circumstantiis, ut negare non possumus ipsos Evangelistas credidisse Christi corpus resurrexisse, & quod ab Infidelibus etiam potuisset videri, si unà in iis locis adfuissent in quibus ipse Christus discipulis apparuit.* This I think is speaking fully in Behalf of the Sincerity of our Witnesses, and of the Motives too of their Belief in the Resurrection; tho' after all these Concessions, he will have it that the Disciples might be deceived, and take an Appearance for a Truth. I have therefore nothing more to do, but to shew from the Circumstances they give of this Fact, that they could not be deceived as to the Fact of the Resurrection; that they must have been able to distinguish their real Master from his Ghost or Apparition.

IN the Morning immediately after the Sabbath was over, certain Women went with Spices to embalm our SAVIOUR'S Body; when they came to the Sepulchre, they found the Stone rolled away, tho' they could not imagine by whom; they went into the Grave, and were in a great Consternation upon not finding our SAVIOUR'S Body there; they went and told this to Two of his Disciples, who went to the Sepulchre, and found what the Women had told them to be true; no Body there, only the Burying-Cloaths to be found. Thus far then must be evident to them, That the Body was not in the Sepulchre, whatever was the Cause of its Removal: This is a Matter of Fact, of which no Body will deny they might be good Witnesses: The only Difficulty that can be made, is, Whether the Appearances of our SAVIOUR to his Disciples were *real*, or only *imaginary*. It must be observed from the Account which all our Evangelists give of this Matter, that the Disciples were so far from being credulous, or ready to believe that their Master was risen, that they all rejected the Story of the Women, concerning his being risen to Life, as an idle Tale: They might therefore be capable of being good Witnesses, when

\* Bayle Histor. Dict. voce *Spinoza*.

† Epist. 23.

‡ Ibid. 25.



Gurdon, they witnessed *against* their Prejudices. But let us see what Reasons prevailed upon them, prejudiced as they were, to believe that he was really risen; and whether such Reasons would not have determined any Reasonable Man to believe as they did. They *saw* him at several Times, knew that *He* was exactly like that Person, whom they saw t'other Day hanging upon a Cross: They *heard* him talk often with them, they knew 'twas so like their Master's Voice, that they did not doubt they as really heard him talk, after he was *dead*, as they had done, while He was *alive*, and as if the Testimony of two of their Senses was not a sufficient Proof of his being their old Master, One of them, *viz.* Thomas, was so incredulous, that he declared, he would not believe it was really his Master, unless he might not only *see* in his Hands the Marks of the Nails, with which the *Jews* had fastened them to the Cross, but also *thrust his Fingers into the Holes, and thrust his Hand into his Side*, that had been wounded by the Spear. Thomas was gratified in all this, and convinced that it was not an Apparition that only counterfeited the Aspect and Voice of his Master, but really and truly his Master raised to Life again; for by touching and handling his Master, he had a farther Evidence that it was his Master, and not an Apparition, because such *have not Flesh and Bones*, as Thomas found his Master had, and therefore cried out for Joy, *My LORD, and my GOD*. He did not appear to his Disciples once, twice, or thrice, but a great many Times before his Ascension; and these Appearances were not short and transient, but in some of them He staid so long with them, as to eat and drink with them; so as they had sufficient Opportunities, and Time enough for examining, whether it was He or not; and at last they saw the same Person whom they had so often seen, parted from them, and ascending up into Heaven. If after all this Evidence, these Witnesses were deceived, we must give up the Testimony of the Senses as not to be depended on in any Case whatever; and the *Spinofist* might, if he had pleased, with as good Reason have said, That the Disciples of our LORD were deceived in believing their Master was any Thing more than a *Man in Appearance only* even before Crucifixion; 'till he is pleased to tell us what Sort of Evidence he would have insisted upon, which the Apostles had not.

It will not be sufficient to say, That I have allowed the Magicians Rods to be only in *Appearance* turned into Serpents, and yet no doubt the Standers by were as fully persuaded that the Rods were *really* become Serpents, as the Apostles were that they saw their LORD, when they saw his *Apparition*: Because we don't find that the Standers by were difficult in believing the Conversion of the Magicians Rods, and therefore not careful in examining, whether it was so or not. Whereas in this Instance of the Resurrection, his Disciples were averse to believing it true, and therefore nice in their Examination; they had several Opportunities at different Times of seeing our SAVIOUR; whereas this Conversion of the Magicians Rod was once made, and quickly destroyed by Aaron's Rod, so that there was not much Time allowed for examining the Truth of that *Appearance*; and there was no Necessity for Moses's discovering that the Change was not *real*; because their Rods being made to disappear by Aaron's Rod, was a sufficient Confutation of the Power by which the Magicians acted, altho' the Conversion in both Cases had been only in *Appearance*.

If it be said, That had our SAVIOUR really risen with the same Body He laid down in the Grave, the Two Disciples of his whom He joyned as they were travelling to *Emmaus*, must have known him, because they both saw him, and had a long Discourse with him. Our Answer is, That St. Mark tells us, our SAVIOUR appeared to them *ἐν ἑτέρῳ μὶθῳ*; in a different Dress from what those Disciples had been used to see him in; as He appeared at another Time to *Mary Magdalen* in the Habit of a *Gardiner*. That it often happens that we do not know our most intimate Friends, when they have disguis'd themselves with a Design to be concealed from us; especially if we meet them at a Place or Time, when and where we not only did not expect to see them, but



were fully persuaded they were at that Time in another Place; which was *Gurdon*. plainly the Case of the Two Disciples with Regard to our SAVIOUR: For *SERM.* notwithstanding the Report the Women had made to them of his being living, *XII.* they seem to have believed nothing of the Matter, and therefore could have no Thoughts of meeting upon the Road a Person whom they did not believe to be alive: And then 'tis very possible, they might entertain no Suspicion of its being their *Master*, altho' the Person they saw and conversed with, might very much resemble him, both in his Aspect and his Voice. And therefore nothing can be inferred from this Fact, to the Prejudice of a *real* Resurrection: Nothing that ought to hinder us from concluding, That if after those frequent Occasions which the Disciples of our LORD had of *seeing Him*, of eating and drinking with Him, of handling him after his Resurrection, their Testimony of his being alive might still be false; they must have been Deceivers and believed nothing themselves of the Facts they tell us: But *Spinoza* has already acquitted them from any Design of imposing upon us; consequently, our SAVIOUR must have *really* risen again, and not in *Appearance* only: But by *Spinoza's* Confession, such a Fact exceeding all the Powers of Nature, must have GOD for its Author. Which is enough to shew, That some uncommon Works may be a good Proof of a Divine Mission; and therefore that it cannot be a good Reason for refusing a fair Examination to any Revelation, to plead, That there is no other Way of Proving it *such*; but by some Extraordinary or Uncommon Works.



## S E R M O N XIII.

I COR. i. 21.

*For after that, in the Wisdom of GOD, the World by Wisdom knew not GOD, it pleased GOD by the foolishness of Preaching to save them that believe.*

Gurdon.  
S E R M.  
XIII.

**T**HE Design of our Apostle in this Chapter was, to mortify some Persons, who at that Time pretended to despise the Christian Religion, because of its Plainness and Simplicity. Besides many other Exceptions they made against it, such as the mean Estate of its first Author, and his dying so much like a common Malefactor, they were not a little offended at it, because its Professors did not give their Doctrines the Air and Turn of the Schools, nor proved them from any of the then admired Principles of Truth; but required Men to take them upon the Credit and Authority of one JESUS, whom they affirmed to have been sent on Purpose by GOD to publish them to the World: They expected to have had the Immortality of the Soul, a Resurrection and such-like Doctrines made out to them from Principles of Reason and *Philosophy*; for, as the Apostle tells us, *They sought after Wisdom*, v. 22. with which goodly Title they were wont to dignify their Speculations in *Philosophy*; but when they found the Apostles were Persons altogether unacquainted with any of their Systems, the then reputed Standards of Truth and good Sense; and that they chiefly insisted upon the Authority of their MASTER, they slighted their Preaching, as fit only for the Entertainment of the illiterate and credulous Part of Mankind; the Authority of a Master, especially of One that came to so bad an End, appeared to them to be no better than Foolishness, or foolish Talking. CHRIST crucified, to the Greeks Foolishness, v. 23. As an Answer to this Way of Reasoning, St Paul tells them, That if Christianity was Foolishness, it was only such to those who perished by rejecting it; but as to those who embraced it, it was the Power of GOD, and the Wisdom of GOD: And as a Proof of the Truth of what he said, he bids his *Corinthians* ask these vain Men, What they with all their Wisdom had done towards bringing the World to a true Sense of Religion, and whether they could shew any such Effects of their Instructions, as were every Day produced by the Preaching of the Gospel? *Where is the Wise? Where is the Scribe? Where is the Disputer of this Age? Hath not GOD made foolish the Wisdom of this World?* v. 20. Of which he gives an undeniable Instance, That after all their Attempts, and all their boasted Wisdom, they were not got so far as to know the Object of their Worship aright; or, allowing some few of them to have had just Notions of the DEITY, that yet they were never able to propagate any of them among the Rest of the World. And therefore as the Way of Wisdom and Knowledge had not sufficiently answered the Purposes of informing the Bulk of Mankind in their Duty, he tells them, GOD was pleased to proceed with Men after a new Method, and to bring them to Himself and an holy Life, without profound Knowledge, in a Way of Believing. *For after that, in the Wisdom of GOD, the World by Wisdom knew not GOD, it pleased GOD by the Foolishness of Preaching to save them that believe.*



FROM the *Text* thus explained, I shall take an Occasion of comparing together these two different Ways of Instruction, by Faith, and Reason: And after having established the Reasonableness of submitting to the Instructions of Faith, shew, That this is on many Accounts better fitted for Teaching Men their Duty, and the Principles that enforce it, than Reason or *Philosophy*: And consequently, tho' the Nature and Will of GOD, as far as is necessary to be known, was discoverable (as the *Deist* says) by Natural Light; yet a Revelation might be of great Use to Mankind; and therefore such a Method of Instruction not unworthy or unbecoming the Wisdom of GOD.

I HAVE already observed, That the Reasons by which the *Deist* pretends to defend himself, while he rejects Revelation, without giving it a fair Hearing, are these:

1<sup>st</sup>, "THAT there is no proving a Revelation, but by Miracles; and that Miracles will never prove any Thing but our own Ignorance.

2<sup>dly</sup>, "THAT if they could be made to prove Something, they could not prove a Revelation, because a Revelation would be useless, and therefore cannot have GOD for its Author, who does nothing in vain, or without good Reason.

3<sup>dly</sup>, "BECAUSE there are so many Pretences to Revelation, all of them pretending to be supported by the Extraordinary Power of GOD, that there is no discovering which of them is the true one, if any such were."

THESE are the Difficulties which hinder him, as he pretends, from believing as we do.

As to the first of these, I have considered it already \*. The second Difficulty they support by these two Reasons: 1. "Because Authority cannot be a sufficient Ground to form a Rational Assent upon. 2. Because whatever is needful to be known in Religious Matters, may be found out by Reason and Discourse."

I SHALL therefore shew 1<sup>st</sup>, That Authority may be a good Reason for giving our Assent to a Proposition.

2<sup>dly</sup>, THAT a Revelation is better fitted on many Accounts for Teaching Men their Duty, than Reason or *Philosophy*: And therefore that 'tis not unbecoming the Wisdom of GOD to make one.

1<sup>st</sup>, THE Reasonableness of Believing, or the Reasonableness of such a Persuasion, as is entirely built upon Faith or Authority, is to be proved. By a Persuasion formed upon *Faith* or *Authority*, in Distinction from a Persuasion that rests upon *Reason* only; I mean, a Persuasion, That a Proposition is true, altho' our Reason cannot discover any necessary Agreement between the Parts of the Proposition; but believes them to be truly connected, because we are told as much; so as if GOD reveals a Proposition to us, which Natural Reason discovers to be evidently and necessarily true, as He has done in the Moral Law; all such as do evidently perceive it to be true, can't be properly said to take it for a Truth upon Faith, or the Authority of GOD, but upon the Reason and Evidence of the Thing: because where the Proof is clear and evident, the Reason of Assent will be resolved into its Evidence, not into the Authority of the Person who relates it to us for a Truth. And therefore when a certain † Author tells us, "He neither ought, nor can Assent to any Proposition, till the Mind does thoroughly understand, and evidently perceive it to be true;" he effectually excludes Authority from being any Reason of our Assent; it being then only that our Assent proceeds from a Principle of Faith, when 'tis given before any such Evidence appears.

GOD had left Mankind, except a very small Part, the *Jews*, almost without any other Directions, than what Natural Reason could furnish them with. For excepting some few Traditions, such as those concerning the Formation of the Earth, and the Drowning it by a Deluge of Waters, and some others, (which too had the usual Fate of Doctrines conveyed in the Way of Tradition, viz. of

\* See Sermon XII.

† Christianity not Mysterious.



*Gurdon.* being so confounded with Fable and Story, that to discover how much of them SERM. was true, what added to the Original Tradition, was near as difficult, as it

XIII. would have been to have discovered those Truths without the Help of any Tradition;) excepting some few Traditions, whatever they found out, was in a Way of Reason and *Philosophy*, by such Inferences as Reason was able to draw from its own Principles. GOD sent no Prophets amongst them to declare authoritatively what their Duty was, but every one was to find it out as well as he could. Not but that he raised up Great and Learned Men, such as many of the Philosophers in the several Sects were, to be the Interpreters of Duty to the People, and perhaps assisted them too in those great Discoveries they made concerning Himself, and their Duty to Him; but then GOD did all this in a Way of Reason and human Wisdom: They never pretended they had them from GOD, or urged Men to the Belief of them on that Account; the only Arguments they insisted on, were such rational Deductions from the Nature of Things, as Reason and Observation might have furnished them with. But notwithstanding all their wise Instructions, and the Discoveries made by them concerning the Object of Worship; yet we find the Bulk of Mankind made small Improvements under them; for *St Paul* tells us, the World with all its Wisdom was not gotten so far, as to know the True GOD; and therefore GOD observing the small Proficiency Men made under this Sort of Teachers, was pleased to take it upon Himself to teach Mankind, and free them from the Trouble of Searching what their Duty was, by long and elaborate Deductions from Principles of Reason; that now they should rely upon his Credit for such Truths as they wanted to be satisfied in; that they should have His Authority for a Proof, instead of those tedious, and often times slippery Inferences from Reason, or those much more uncertain and ill-grounded Traditions, which were the best Means they had of coming at the Knowledge of some Truths of the greatest Importance.

ONE would think that Mankind should have received this Method of being Taught by GOD with the greatest Satisfaction, and a due Sense of their Obligations to GOD their Teacher; that no one should have put Him upon proving what He asserted, before they could believe Him; that his Veracity, whom Natural Reason discovers to be too Wise to be imposed upon *Himself*, and too Good to impose upon *others*, should have removed all Objections against such a Method of Instruction: And yet some People pretend to assure us, That Assent given to what we don't thoroughly understand, tho' supported by the greatest Authority, is repugnant to the Nature of a Rational Being: That clear and distinct Ideas are to the Understanding, what Light and a fit *Medium* are to the Eye; and that a Man may as well see an Object, when either of these are wanting, as the Mind assent to any Truth, of which it has not clear and distinct Ideas: That Authority, as such, being a Thing foreign to the Proposition, to which we give our Assent, and not making it more intelligible than it was before, cannot therefore induce a Rational Assent; and consequently, that the Obedience of Faith, and Resignation of Understanding, so much talk'd of, are a perfect Contradiction to the Nature of an human Mind.

IF this Objection were just, it would not be easy to make out what the Apostle contends for, *viz.* The Preferableness of the Way of *Faith* above that of *Wisdom*, for the Salvation of Mankind. For, if all Assent must be resolved into clear and distinct Ideas as the sole Cause of it, and no Man could Assent, 'till he had such Ideas; there would be no Room left for Assenting upon a Principle of Faith; for, as I before observed, all Propositions of Faith, properly so called, do suppose that the Person to whom they are such, does not thoroughly understand them. That all Assent must be grounded on some Kind of Evidence or other, is very certain; and also that a Man must have a clear and distinct Perception of the Sense of a Proposition, before he can give any Assent to it; otherwise he would Assent to he knows not what: But then it does not follow that a Man can't give his Assent, 'till he is able to find out those Proofs, which shew the Connexion and Agreement between the Parts of the Proposition; for



why may not Authority, affirming the Truth of a Proposition, be a sufficient *Gurdon.* Evidence to warrant our Assent? 'Tis true, Authority, as *such*, does not help us *SERM.* to understand the Proposition better then we did before; and yet the Opinion we *XIII.* may have of the Person's Skill and Veracity, who tells us the Proposition is true, may be to us, who have this Opinion of him, a probable Evidence of its Truth, and a Rational Ground of Persuasion. For no one can doubt, whether a Man may not rationally enough give his Assent to the Truth of any one Proposition in *Euclid*, if he understands the Terms of it, altho', being unacquainted with that Science, he may not be able to demonstrate it; and yet the *only* Ground of his Assent, in such Case, would be the Authority of some Person, whom he believed able to do it. For the same Reason, tho' we are far from having any clear and distinct Ideas of a Resurrection, and can see no Connexion between our dying and rising to Life again, yet we may assent to this Proposition, That the dead shall live again, if we be once satisfied that the Person who tells us it shall be so, is a Lover of Truth, and able to connect the Parts of this Proposition. And therefore a clear and distinct Understanding of a Truth, cannot be previously necessary to every Assent of the Mind of Man.

IF we should also consider the limited Nature of our Faculties, that they fall vastly short of reaching the whole Extent of Being; that there are few Things about which we can certainly determine; many Truths of great Importance to us, for which in a Way of Reason we should want evident Proofs; that there are many more, which the Generality of Mankind would scarce be capable of understanding, for want of Skill to use such Proofs as Reason discovers: Considering all this, one might think it no Injury done to any Man's Understanding, if he received these Truths in a more *certain*, and much *easier* Way, as I shall presently shew, from the Eternal Fountain of Knowledge. For no Body, I think, would blame a Person who was sensible of a Defect in his Eye-sight, for believing the Report of another upon the Subject of *Seeing*, if he thought him to be an honest Man, and to have better Eyes than himself; and yet the Report of such a Person does not help him to *see* the Thing better, than he did before But,

2dly, I PROCEED to shew some of the Advantages of this Way of Teaching the World by Faith, above that of Reason: As,

1st, UPON account of its Certainty. Whilst Mankind was left to the Directions of Natural Reason, we meet with nothing but Uncertainty and Irresolution about Truths of the highest Concern; they were perpetually Disputing about the *Origin* of the World, some contending it owed its Original to a lucky jumbling together of the Parts of Matter: Others, That besides Matter, there was another Principle, *viz.* Mind, that actuated Matter, and raised it into that beautiful Order we now see it in. Others not seeing how the many Goods and Evils that lie every where so intermixed, could, being so contrary in their Natures, proceed from the same Principle, concluded, That besides Matter, there must be Two other Principles, One the Author of all the Good, and the Other of all the Evil in the World. Nor were they less at a Loss about the Government of the World; one, and that no inconsiderable Sect of Philosophers, leaving it to the Guidance of *Chance*; others to *Fate* or *Necessity*; and others to a GOD or *Free Agent*. The Generality of Men were under great Uncertainty as to their Forgiveness, after their having offended the DEITY. Some hoped their Concern for having done so, and a Resolution to behave better for the future, would be sufficient to make their Peace with GOD; but the greatest Part would not trust to this, without adding a Vicarious Death, as an Atonement for their Faults: But whether either, or both of them, would be accepted, was more than Reason could inform them; because it could not appear that GOD was obliged by any of his Perfections to accept of either or of both; and such Things as depend upon his Will, and are Acts of Bounty or Favour, cannot be known 'till He pleases to reveal them. If we look into their Debates concerning the Happiness which GOD designed Man for, we shall find them at a great Loss where to fix it; however, they generally look'd no farther for it than on



*Gurdon.* this Side the Grave, many of them denying any Reward beyond this Life, and  
 S E R M. the rest very much doubting it; so as St. *Paul* might justly charge the *Gentile*  
 XIII. World with not knowing the True G O D. For tho' some of them had very just  
 and honourable Notions of G O D, and did discover there was a Great and Good  
 B E I N G, that at first made, and does still govern the World; yet they could  
 not, neither was it likely that they should, persuade the rest of the World to be  
 of *their* Mind. Because there were some Objections which *then* lay against this  
 Supposition, for which Reason was unable to account; as for Instance, They  
 could never give any Man a satisfactory Account of the many Evils, both Moral  
 and Natural, that were too visible in the World; or reconcile them with the  
 Supposal of a Good and Gracious B E I N G at the Helm of our Affairs; because  
 they knew nothing of the happy State of the first Parents of Mankind; and that  
 they were deprived of it for an Act of wilful Disobedience, and that our Mor-  
 tality, with all the Consequences attending such a State, is an Effect of their  
 Mismanagement \*. For as to the pre-existent State, which was the best Account  
 they were able to give of this Difficulty, no Proof could be made of it; and  
 therefore those who would not take up their Opinions upon trust, chose to as-  
 cribe the Government of the World to Fate, or any Thing rather than G O D,  
 upon whose Goodness they thought it would highly reflect, if He had created a  
 Rational Being with such a Bias to Evil, and placed it in so uncomfortable an  
 Habitation. The Difficulties attending some Religious Truths in a Way of Rea-  
 son, seem to have determin'd some of them to the Way of proposing their Sen-  
 timents as Matters disputable; in which Manner the *Academy* proceeded with  
 their Scholars. They declared against all Dogmatical Determinations in Matters  
 of Religion, and contented themselves with examining the several Pretences of  
 others, without establishing any Opinion of their own upon more than *probable*  
 Grounds. Thus we find *Cicero* who was one of the Learnedest among them,  
 engaging the several Sects of Philosophers in a Dispute about the Nature of the  
 Gods, exposing in their Turns the Weakness of each of them, and at last refu-  
 sing, tho' desired by *Cotta*, to tell us, what himself thought of the Subject †.  
 We have then the most considerable Man of a Sect remarkable for Men of Abi-  
 lities, at a time too when Learning and good Sense were at the highest Pitch in  
*Greece* and *Rome*, tacitly giving up the Cause of Reason and *Philosophy*, as in-  
 sufficient to *insure* any Man in Truths concerning G O D and Religion.

W H A T then could the rest of the World do, when their greatest Men were  
 so much divided in these Matters? especially when those who had the most  
*Truth* on their Sides, made the least Pretences to *Certainty*; we may easily ima-  
 gine that but Few, and those of very inquisitive Tempers, would give them-  
 selves the Trouble of entring into their Speculations, that the rest of the  
 World would slight their Lectures, as despairing to find where the Truth lay,  
 when *they* were so much divided about it. And so it proved; their Divisions  
 did so weaken their Authority, and the Influence which otherwise they must  
 have had, that altho' many of them were convinced of the Unity of the D E I T Y  
 themselves, they were never able to stop the Progress of *Polytheism*, or oblige the  
 Government of any one State in the World, to set up the Worship of the One  
 True G O D. They were so little able to reform Mankind in this Particular,  
 that in St. *Paul's* Time their Disciples (the *Heathen* World) still went on in their  
 old Way of Worship; *In changing the Glory of the incorruptible G O D, into an*  
*Image made like to corruptible Man, and to Birds, and Four-footed Beasts, and*  
*Creeping Things* ||. Whereas when G O D Himself undertook to teach the  
 World in a Way of Faith, all Wavering and Irresolution concerning his Na-  
 ture and Will, quickly vanish'd. The Apostles were well agreed in publishing  
 the same Doctrines, and proposed them to their Hearers as certain Truths; and  
 those that gave in their Names heartily to this New Institution, left off all Dis-  
 putes of this Kind, and adhered steddily to what the Apostles taught them; be-  
 ing fully persuaded that what they taught them was the Truth: The good Ef-

\* Rom. v. 19.

† Vide Lib. III. Ad finem, de Natura Deorum.

|| Rom. i. 23.



fects of this Agreement quickly appeared in the wonderful Success they had in *Gurdon*. Propagating the Christian Doctrine; *Polytheism* and *Idolatry* being forced every where to give Place to the Worship of the One True God, which in a very few Centuries became the established Worship of almost the *then* known World. And tho' the first Preachers of this Way lay under great Disadvantages, as being of a Nation that the *Greeks* and *Romans* look'd upon as little better than barbarous, tho' they were not versed in the Ways of Reasoning, and the Arts of Persuasion, that were then most likely to have recommended their Doctrines; yet when the World came to consider the Strength of that Evidence, which they brought in Proof of them, and from thence saw plainly that Truth was to be found amongst them, which the endless Disputes and Wranglings of their great Men had forbidden them to expect, they quickly came over to them, quitted all their old Engagements in Favour of the Religion of their Country, and submitted themselves to their Instructions; which was more than the Philosophers, those great Masters of Reasoning, and who so well understood the Art of managing Men's Passions, could ever effect. For, whatever Repute their Schools might have as fit Places for Teaching Men the Rules of human Wisdom; yet it is plain from the Multitude of their Oracles, and the frequent Recourse that was had to them upon all Occasions, that the World did not think their Reasonings in Matters of Religion were much to be depended on, and that Faith was a much more certain Principle of Truth.

PERHAPS it may be thought I have used an Argument that may be turned upon me, and upon that Faith which 'tis brought to defend, because it does not appear that there has ever been any better Agreement in *Opinions* among Christians, than there was among Heathens; and therefore if the great Diversity of *Opinions* amongst them, be a good Argument to prove the *Uncertainty* they were in, then as great a Difference amongst Christians, ought in all Reason to infer as great an *Uncertainty*; that the Histories of pass'd and present Times, and the large Catalogues of Heresies that are given us by *Epiphanius*, *Philastrius* and others do abundantly shew, that the Disputes between Christians concerning Articles of Religion, come not short of those among Heathens. That tho' the Authority of Scripture be granted, yet the World is never the nearer to an Agreement in the Articles of Religion, as is plain by the infinite Number of *Commentaries* upon the same Scriptures, and the constant Appeal of all Sects of Christians, how opposite soever in their Opinions, to the same Holy Writings: and therefore the Way of Faith seems not to have any great Advantages above that of Reason on the Score of *Certainty*.

IN Answer to this, it may be said, That as to the Catalogues of Heresies given us by the Ancients, they were not much to be relied upon; that many of them were concerning Matters of small Consequence, and not belonging to the Essence of Religion, as appears by the Catalogues themselves; and the Writers of those Times observe, That People were then very forward in making unfair Representations of their Adversaries Opinions, and calling every Opinion that differed from their own, by the odious Title of Heresy. That if Christians did differ about the Sense of some Places of Scripture that contained Articles of Importance, such as those which concerned the *Incarnation of the Word in the Person of our SAVIOUR*, a *TRINITY in Unity*, and some other difficult Doctrines; that yet as to those Articles in which I have charged the Heathens with being very much divided, such as those concerning the *MAKER and GOVERNOR of the World*, whether there was any one Intelligent *BEING* to whom these Titles did of Right belong: If there was, whether He had made any Provision in some *other* State for such as had served Him faithfully, tho' imperfectly in *this*: As to any of these Articles, the Disputes among such as professed the Christian Religion were always exceeding few, if compared with those amongst the Heathens: And no Christian Sect of any Note at this Time, denies any one of them. That these are of all others Truths of the greatest Concern, as without which there could be no sufficient Reason for serving God at all; for he that cometh to God, must believe



Gurdon. lieve these two Things; *that He is*, and that He is a *Rewarder of them that*  
 SERM. *seek Him*. That the Belief of the other Doctrines of Religion is chiefly re-  
 XIII. quired of us for this very End, that our Faith in *these* might be more firm  
 and better grounded; and therefore an Agreement amongst Christians, so much  
 wanted among such as were under the Guidance of *Natural Light*, tho'  
 it were to be found only in *these* Truths; yet if we consider the Importance  
 of them to Religion, would sufficiently prove a *Revelation* to be better qua-  
 lified for Teaching Mankind the Principles and Motives to Duty, than *Reason*  
 or *Philosophy*.

HOWEVER, supposing that by Deductions made from Principles of Reason, the wiser and more intelligent Part of the World could have arrived at as great *Certainty*, and been as well agreed in these Articles I have now mentioned, as we Christians are by the Help of Revelation; yet still the Way of Faith would be much more effectual towards a general Instruction of the World, than that of Reason; because a Revelation teaches in a Method that is better suited to the different *Opportunities* and *Apprehensions* of Men. And that

1<sup>st</sup>, BECAUSE its Way of Teaching is much shorter and more compendious than that of Reason, therefore better fitted for the different Opportunities of Men.

2<sup>dly</sup>, BECAUSE 'tis more easy and more intelligible; consequently, better suited to the different Degrees of Understanding among Men.

1<sup>st</sup>, BECAUSE its Method of Teaching is shorter. If we consider the State of Mankind, we may observe that much the greatest Part are given up to Labour, and enslaved to a mean Condition, almost all their Time and Pains laid out in making the necessary Provisions for Life. And therefore if we would undertake to teach such Persons their Duty, we must use the shortest Method with them that's possible\*; but if we compare together the different Ways of Proof from *Reason* and from *Faith*, we shall easily observe that any Truth will be much sooner learnt, when 'tis proved by an Argument drawn from *Faith*, than the same Truth would be by *Reason*; for if we would learn any Thing in the Way of Arguing from Principles of *Reason*, we must be oftentimes content to go Step by Step thro' several Consequences, before we can arrive at our Conclusion; especially if the Truths we would understand, be of a Complex Nature, such as are those which concern our Duty. For before we can understand our Obligation to any of the Moral Laws by *Reason*, we must consider our own Natures, and observe the natural Tendencies of Things; and from these infer our Obligations. As for Instance; If I would understand whether I am obliged to be just in my Dealings, *Reason* would discover it to be so, because Man is naturally made for Society, and can't live with tolerable Comfort without it; and the World is so ordered, that unless just and fair Dealings were observed, no Society could possibly be kept up, but would quickly end in Tumult and Confusion: From thence I would conclude, That since GOD had made Justice so necessary to the Well-being of Mankind, that He intended Men should practice this Virtue; to understand our Obligation to this, or any other Duty in a Way of Faith, nothing more is necessary, than seeing what the Scriptures, which are the Word of GOD, determine in this Matter. There we may presently learn what our Duty is, by applying what the Scriptures say, to our own Case, and discover at one View what Reason can't make evident to us, 'till it has put us to the Trouble of ranging our Thoughts, and observing the Relation and Dependence they have one upon another. This is none of the least Advantages which Faith has above Reason, that it instructs us in so compendious a Method, that there is no Man, let his Circumstances be never so strait, but may find Time enough to learn his Duty.

\* Origen contra Celsum. Lib. I. p. 9.



2dly, As Faith teaches us in a shorter Way, so in a more intelligible one, *Gurdon.* and which is therefore better fitted for the different Degrees of Understanding amongst Men. Whilst there was no other Way of Teaching the World but *SERM. XIII.* by Natural Reason, we find the wiser Heathens were so sensible of the Difficulty of Teaching Men their Duty, that they would constantly run thro' a Course of the difficult Parts of Knowledge, with their Scholars, before they could think them capable of learning *Morality*. The *Epicureans* required the Knowledge of Natural Things, the *Platonists* some Skill in the *Mathematicks*, as a Preparatory to their *Ethical Lectures*. They found by Experience how little the Generality of the World could apprehend them, when they were Reasoning concerning the Supreme BEING, and their several Duties to Him, and therefore generally agreed in excluding the Bulk of Mankind from a Possibility of attaining to any great Degrees of Virtue; looking upon such only as capable of Virtue, who were furnished with good Natural Abilities, and had enjoyed the Benefits of a liberal Education; but as to all the rest of the World, we find *Seneca* ranking them among the Beasts that perish; so as by their own Confession, the Way of *Reason* could never have done much towards bringing the World to a Sense of their Duty, when they shut out the greatest Part of it from a Capacity of receiving Benefit by it. And 'tis easy to observe, that the Generality of Men are hardly capable of any other Notices of Things, than what are impress'd by the Objects of Sense; they have not Skill enough to compare simple Terms so exactly with one another, as to compound them into true Propositions, and then to infer from every Proposition its Natural Consequences and Deductions; nor when they are made for them, always to see the Connexion and Force of the Argument. An Argument that strikes their Senses shall much more effectually convince them of any Truth, than any the most exact and elaborate Reasonings upon it: And therefore the Miracles performed by our SAVIOUR and his Apostles, did quickly draw the Multitude after them, and in a little Time brought them in more Disciples, than the abstruse Speculations of the Philosophers had ever done before. For every Man is able to judge whether a blind Man had been restored to his Sight; whether the Deaf to their Hearing, and whether the Dead had been raised to Life again; Sense being the proper Judge in these Cases, and then any Man, that had either seen or heard of such Things done, would naturally draw the same Conclusion from them, as the poor Man in the *Gospel* did, when cured of his blindness, that the Person who had perform'd that Cure must be one that came with Power from above; *If this Man were not of GOD he could do nothing* \*. Thus far every Man will be able to Reason, let his Understanding be never so mean or shallow. The Advantages of a Revelation for teaching Men their Duty would be farther seen, by comparing the Practice of Preaching the Religion to the People, as 'tis done in our Churches, with the Lectures of the Philosophers, or the Instructions of *Pagan Priests*: Which will be done in the following Discourse.

IN the mean Time this Observation naturally arises from the Whole, That all Endeavours of undermining Revelation, and weakning its Authority, are direct Attempts upon the Good and Happiness of Mankind; since the destroying its Credit, is bringing the World back again to the Instructions of Natural Reason, which how little qualified it is for an Universal Guide, we have already seen. And therefore, before any undertake to run-down Revelation, I would beg of them to consider a few Things; That they would look back upon former Times, those Times of Ignorance, which GOD is said to have winked at; I would desire them to reflect upon the extravagant Superstitions, and absurd Rites that made the greatest Part of the Established Worship of the Heathen Nations, and then I would ask them, Whether it was not greatly

\* John ix. 33.



*Gurdon.* for the Honour and Happiness of Mankind, to be rescued from such Errors as  
 SERM. were a Reproach and Scandal to human Nature; and to have a Rational Wor-  
 XIII. ship and Religion in the Room of 'em? And whether 'tis not highly probable,  
 ~~~~~ that if the Credit of Revelation were once destroyed, the World would in a few  
 Ages return to as bad a State as that in which Christian Religion found it? I am
 sure they can't bring any good Arguments to prove it would not be so; and tho'
 it must be confessed, that notwithstanding Revelation, the World is still bad
 enough; yet if we compare the Histories of the Times that were before, with
 those that succeeded, we shall soon see that it has been much improved by it; as
 might be shewn in the many irrational Customs, and obscene Rites of Worship
 (such as those paid to the *Mother of the Gods* *) that have been abolished in the
 several Nations, where *It* has been received; when the Preachers of Natural
 Religion could never prevail with the People to part with any of them.

FROM hence too we may observe, That the Unbeliever cannot be safe from
 the Apprehensions of Punishment in a future State, while he has no better Ar-
 guments for rejecting our Christian Revelation, than pleading the Difficulty of
 seeing what Use a Revelation could be of to Mankind.

* Vide Aug. de Civitate Dei. Lib. II. Cap. 4, & 5.

S E R M O N XIV.

1 C O R. i. 21.

For after that, in the Wisdom of GOD the World by Wisdom knew not GOD, it pleased GOD by the foolishness of Preaching to save them that believe.

THE Want of a Revelation has been proved from the Uncertainty in *Gurdon*. which Mankind was, with regard to such Truths as it nearly concern'd every Body to know. Such as these; Whether there were any Supreme Intelligent BEING that took notice of the Actions and Behaviour of Men; and whether, supposing such an one, He would forgive Mens voluntary Mistakes, upon their being sincerely concern'd for them, and resolving to do better for the future; and whether He designed to take any farther notice of them after they were once dead, by restoring them to Life again, and Rewarding or Punishing them for their Behaviour here. As to all these, I have already shewn, That the World laboured under great Uncertainties. I have also proved the Insufficiency of Reason for rescuing Mankind from this Uncertainty, and for instructing them in their Duty, from the Consideration of those different Ranks and Orders seen amongst Men: That the lower Order, which is the Generality of Men, is enslaved to a mean Condition, that such a Condition will not allow Time sufficient for Speculation, or for considering in a Way of Reason what their Duty was. That in a Way of Authority Mens Duty might be made much more easy and intelligible to them than by Reason or Philosophy. I am further to prove the Usefulness of a Revelation by one Method of Teaching Men their Duty peculiar to it, which is, By Preaching that Religion in mix'd Assemblies, where Persons of all Degrees may meet, and receive Instruction by that which the vain Philosophers in my Text called the Foolishness of Preaching.

I AM not obliged to consider, Whether under Natural Religion the World might not have been better taught than they were, in Virtue of such Principles as Natural Reason might have suggested to them; tho' I have already shewn*, That Morality could not be explained so familiarly in a Philosophical Lecture, as it is in our Homilies or Discourses to the People; but whether in Fact, after a Trial of Four or Five Thousand Years, they did hit upon so good a Method of Reforming the World, as this of Preaching, which was introduced among us by Revelation. The Excellency of this Institution will easily appear, if we consider it as inviting all Sorts of Persons to come and be Hearers; and also the Number of Places which have been usually set apart for the Performance of this Religious Exercise. I have already observed, That only Persons of Letters or of a liberal Education, pretended to go to the Schools of the Philosophers, but now all Ranks of Men, the lowest and most indigent of the People, of all Ages, the Old as well as the Young, Women as well as Men, have always had a free Access to these Schools for the Education of a Christian, I

* See Serm. XIII.

Gurdon. mean our Churches. And if the Schools of Philosophers had made their *Lectures* as intelligible as our *Sermons*; yet it must be considered that their Dis-

XIV. courses, so far as Religion was concerned in them, were merely *Ethical*, regarding Mens Behaviour towards one another, without concerning themselves to tell the People the Manner of Reverence or Worship, that would be most agreeable to the Supreme BEING; they none of them approved any of the then established Ways of Addressing the Divine BEING, and had not Courage enough to teach their Scholars any other, only in general Terms, That the best Way of Worshipping Him, was to imitate Him, and that they told them was best done by studying and observing his Laws; which was, in other Words, nothing more than persuading them to observe Moral Duties on account of their *Beauty* and *Excellency*, as being a Transcript of the Divine Nature; without pressing upon their Disciples the Practice of Morality upon any *Religious* Motives, such as the Hopes of GOD's Favour, and the Fear of his Displeasure; without telling them, they must practice Virtue, because GOD would reward them for so doing, and punish them if they did otherwise. Accordingly we find some of the Fathers of the Church reproaching the *Pagans* with this unlawful Divorce which *their* Philosophers had made of *Religion* from *Morality*. "The *Pagan Philosophy*, says *Lactantius**, and *Religion*, are Two Things quite distinct one from the other; *Morality* has its particular Doctors, (meaning the Philosophers) who do not teach the Manner of approaching the Gods." So that had the Lectures read in their Schools, been more intelligible than our Sermons, yet this *Institution* would have been inferior to our *Preaching*, as one great Branch of Religion, viz. The Manner of Addressing to GOD in Religious Worship, together with the only solid Supports of a Virtuous Life, viz. A Religious Fear of the DEITY, were not taught by *them*.

AND as to the Heathen Priests, whose peculiar Business it was to teach the People how to behave towards GOD; these, I say, made no Discourses to the People concerning their Duty to their Neighbour; they never gave themselves the Trouble to teach Men the Rules of Virtue; but spent their Time in performing the Sacrificial Rites, and certain Ceremonies of their Religion, and in instructing People to follow the prescribed Formulary of external Devotion. "Those (says *Lactantius*†) who teach the Worship of the Gods, take no Notice of any Thing that may serve to regulate Manners and the Conduct of Life, they do not in the least search after Truth, but apply themselves only to learn the Ceremonies of Divine Worship, which require nothing but the Ministry of the Body, and in which the Sentiments of the Heart have no Part." And in another Place ‡, "Religion has likewise its Ministers, who do not teach the Rules of Morality." St. *Austin* || has a Passage to the same Purpose, in which he challenges the *Heathens* to shew "any such Places as our Churches, where the Precepts of the Moral Law are usually read by the Priests, and heard by the People, which he tells them, is the Case wherever the Christian Religion prevails."

WE have no Reason to think these Fathers have wronged the Heathen Priests, if we consider that *they* could not with any Decency pretend to have given the People any Lessons of Morality; because they must have founded very ill from the Mouths of such Persons as were obliged, if they would talk consistently with the Principles of that Religion, to give such frightful Ideas of the Divinity, ascribe to it so many gross Imperfections, Weaknesses, and even Vices, as would be abhorred by any Man that had but a moderate Sense of Honesty.

* Philosophia & religio Deorum disjuncta sunt, si quidem alii sunt professores sapientiae per quos unque ad Deos non aditur. Alii Religionis antistites, per quos sapere non discitur. *Lactant. Institut. Lib. IV. cap. 3.*

† Nihil ibi differitur quod proficiat ad mores excolendos vitamque formandam, nec habet inquisitionem aliquam Veritatis, sed tantummodo ritum colendi, qui non Officio mentis, sed ministerio corporis constat. *Institut. Lib. IV. cap. 3.*

‡ Ibidem.

|| Dicatur in quibus locis hæc docentium Deorum solebant præcepta recitari, & a cultoribus eorum populis frequenter audiri, sicut nos ostendimus ad hoc Ecclesias institutas, quaquaversum Religio Christiana Diffunditur. *Lib. II. cap. 6. De Civitate Dei.*

BUT farther, if we consider the Number of Places set apart for the Performance of this Religious Exercise, we shall still find the Advantages to lie on the Side of a Revelation; these Places are to be met with, not only in Cities and great Towns, but even in the meanest Villages, by which a Provision is made for the Countryman, as well as the Citizen, that he may be taught his Duty, and well skilled in his Religion, without stirring out of the Bounds of his Village or Parish. Whereas the Schools of the Philosophers were very few, and those in Places only where there was on *other* Accounts a great Resort; they were not enough dispersed, as our Churches have been from the Beginning of Christianity, for the general Instruction of Mankind; so that had their Lectures been as plain as our Sermons, the greatest Part of the World could not have resorted to them, by reason of the Distance they lived from those Schools: The lower Sort of People not having Time from their Trades and Employments, to travel far for Instruction. I cannot forbear transcribing the Words of the most Learned Dr. *Prideaux* in his *Connexion* * upon this Occasion. "As the *Jews*, says he, had their Synagogues, "in which the Law and the Prophets were read unto them every Sabbath Day, "so the Christians had their Churches, in which from the Beginning all the "Doctrines and Duties of their Religion were every Lord's Day taught, inculcated and explained to them; and by GOD's Blessing upon this Method, "chiefly was it, that this Holy Religion still bore up against all Oppressions, "and notwithstanding the Ten Persecutions and all other Artifices and Methods "of Cruelty and Oppression, which Hell and Heathenism could devise to suppress it, grew up and increased under them; which *Julian the Apostate* was "so sensible of, that when he put all his Wits to work to find out new Methods for restoring the Heathen Impiety, he could not think of any more effectual for this Purpose than to employ his Philosophers to preach it up "every Week to the People, in the same Manner as the Ministers of the "Gospel did the Christian Religion †." The Use that I would make of this Passage is, To shew, what Opinion one of the subtlest, as well as most malicious Adversaries, that ever the Christian Religion met with, had of this Way of doing Service to any Religion, by Preaching it to the People, as 'tis done in our Churches. Which is a sufficient Answer to such of our Unbelievers, as will not allow it possible for a Revelation to be of any Use or Service to Mankind.

BUT then, if a Revelation be really of such Use to Mankind, it may be ask'd, Why there have not been more Preachers of it, so that all the World might have had the Benefit of it? and in particular, Why the Christian Religion was confined to the *Roman* Empire, or at least not extended much farther? That as GOD is acknowledged to be the Common FATHER of All, and no Respector of Persons or Nations, if this Religion had GOD for its Author, it would have been communicated to the *Upper* as well as the *Lower Asia*, to the *Chinese* and *Tartars*, as well as to those Parts of *Asia* which were in the *Roman* Empire, or bordering upon it; to the *large* Continent of *America*, as well as to the smaller one of *Europe*. The Want of such an Universality, has been urged by a late Author ‡, as a sufficient Reason for Rejecting any Revelation, tho' it comes recommended by every other Proof that can be desired; and for this Reason, "That if no one Revelation has been *equally* made known to All, that none "can be wanting or needful to *any*. And then, there being no real Want of a "Revelation, there can be no Reason for expecting any other Light from GOD, "than what He communicated to us when He gave us our Reasoning Faculty, "as He does nothing in vain, or gives any *extraordinary* Powers, when the *ordinary* ones are sufficient."

I HAVE already shewn, That a Revelation was wanting on several Accounts; and therefore am only obliged to see, whether a partial Revelation be as good an Argument to prove that such a Religion cannot come from GOD, as any

* *Connexion*, Part I. pag. 309.

† Gregory Nazianzen *Oratio contra Julianum*.

‡ Blount's *Miscellanies*, put out by Gildon.

Gurdon. Miracles or extraordinary Works would be to prove that it must come from
 SERM. Him. That the first cannot be so good an Argument to *invalidate* a Revelation,
 XIV. as the latter is to *confirm* it, is evident, because we are sure 'tis inconsistent with
 the Nature of GOD to exercise his Power in so extraordinary a Manner, as is
 that of a Miracle, in Behalf of a Falshood, (which must be the Case, if a *false*
 Religion was supported by true Miracles *) as 'tis impossible that a BEING,
 whose Character is that of a Lover of Truth, should, consistently with its own
 Nature, countenance an Imposture or Falshood. Whereas we are so far from
 seeing any Inconsistence with the Nature of GOD, altho' a Religion should be
 communicated to some, and not to others, that such Communications appear to
 be mere Matters of Favour, which may be granted or refused, without affecting
 any Moral Attribute of GOD: And then the Argument drawn from the former
 cannot be depended upon; because there is nothing for it but the Will and Plea-
 sure of a BEING, who was not at all restrained from acting either Way;
 whereas the latter depends upon his Nature, which is necessarily what it is; and
 therefore the Acts flowing from it as incapable of Change, as the Nature itself
 from which they flow. But,

2dly, SUPPOSING it was not a Matter of mere Favour; yet if it was to be
 communicated at some Time or other to all Nations, and any Reason could be
 given, why not to all at the *same* Time, then no Argument could be drawn
 from the partial Preaching of the Christian Religion, which would affect its Di-
 vinity. But,

1st, ALTHO' when we consider the Uncertainty Mankind was in with Re-
 gard to the Will of GOD, we might have believed that GOD of his Goodness
 would, some Time or other, make Himself better known to us, yet it would be
 a Favour in Him to go out of the common Course of his Providence for any of
 our Advantages. The Light of Reason He had given us for our Direction, and
 if that shone but *darkly*, yet if GOD would have been merciful to such as made
 the best Use of that *dim Light*, neither his Justice nor Goodness could have been
 called in question, tho' He had not made any *extraordinary* Communications of
 his Will to Mankind. We can be grateful in owning the Advantages we *Chri-*
stians have above *Heathens* (in as much as we are assured of Forgiveness of our
 Sins on Account of the meritorious Death of our SAVIOUR, of which the
Heathen could not be certain) without presuming to say, that GOD could not,
 consistently with his Attributes, have remitted our Offences, or that he will not
 still forgive those, who never had the Gospel Preached to them, without the
 Knowledge of such an Atonement. We freely own the Advantages of Faith or
 Revelation for a general Instruction of the World, and yet will not say that GOD
 has left himself without a Witness in the heathen World: that it was possible for
 Men to find out the main Strokes of their Duty, and to hope that GOD would
 pardon upon Repentance, is Evident from many of the Heathen Writers upon
 Morality. If others of meaner Capacities, and whose Opportunities of Improve-
 ment were less, could not strike out their Duty in a way of Reason; this plainly
 shews that GOD was not obliged to give all Men equal Abilities for understand-
 ing *Natural* Religion, and therefore it can never be a good Argument against a
Revealed Religion, should any one argue, That 'tis not from GOD, because
 not equally communicated, or not given to All, as well as to Some. Since no
 Reason can be given, why GOD should be at perfect Liberty in distributing *Nat-*
tural Light in various Degrees to different Men, and different Nations, which
 will not equally hold with Regard to *Supernatural* Light, or that superadded
 Assistance, in the Way of a Revelation. But,

2dly, SUPPOSING it was not a Matter of Favour in GOD to make a Re-
 velation of our Duty; yet if our Christian Revelation shall be communicated
 to All at some Time or other, and some Reasons might be assigned, why it
 should be communicated to *Some* and not to *Others*; then its Want of Univer-
 sality would not affect its Divinity, or its having GOD for its Author. For those

* See Sermon XII.

who lay Stress upon this Argument, must take these Two Things for granted, *Gordon.*
viz. That the Gospel will never be universally propagated; and that no possible *SERM.*
Reasons can be assigned, why *all* Nations, as well as *some*, have not the Gospel *XIV.*
communicated to them at the *same Time*. If there is no Reason for taking
either of these for granted; then the whole Support of this Objection is taken
away.

As to the first of these, an Apostle of our SAVIOUR'S, St. Paul †, has told us, That the Time will come, when the Fulness of the *Gentiles* shall be brought into the Church of CHRIST; and that then the *Jews* too should universally come into a Profession of our Christian Religion. A Preacher then of this Religion having told us, that this would be the Case, no *Deist* can with Reason object, that because the Time is not yet come, therefore it will never come. If St. Paul had told us the precise Time, when this should be; and such Time had been elapsed, we must have given up this Argument concerning the Universal Propagation of our Religion, and owned that the Apostle had mistaken our SAVIOUR'S Meaning. But as there are no particular Marks or Signatures, by which we may judge at what particular Time this should be brought to pass, no Argument can be fairly drawn against our Christian Religion, from its not being as yet universal. But then it may be said, That if Revelation is a great Benefit, it cannot be thought, that as the whole Earth is the LORD'S, and the Fulness thereof, and that He is as much the Common FATHER of the *past* Generations, as of those which are *yet to come*; it cannot be thought, that He would have left so many Parts of the Earth in Darkness for so many Ages since the Gospel was first published in the *Roman Empire*; but would have long e'er this communicated the Gospel to them. Our Answer to this is, That tho' we do not pretend to tell the particular Reasons which determined an infinitely Wise BEING not to send his Apostles into *China*, *Tartary*, or *America*, at the same Time as He sent them over all the *Roman World*: Yet if any probable Reason can be assigned, why it was not at the *same Time* Preached to them, *that* will be sufficient to destroy the Force of this Objection.

ONE Reason why the Christian Religion was not Preached to every Nation of the Earth, at the same Time as it was to those who lived within the Bounds of the *Roman Empire* or bordered upon it, might be, That such Nations were not qualified for receiving the Gospel at that Time. All Law-givers have been won't to suit their Laws to the Nature of the People for whom they designed them; if the People they were to govern were ignorant and unpolished, the prescribing to them at *first* the most exact Rules of Behaviour, would be Labour lost upon them, they would be incapable of bearing with them, and therefore receive no Benefit from them. As their Barbarity wore off, some Irregularities, which had been before tolerated, would be then with good Reason corrected and reformed, according to the strictest Rules of good Sense. The Great Legislator of the World seems to have acted in this Manner, with Regard to the Two Institutions He gave by *Moses* and by CHRIST; by the first He allowed of some Things in Condescension to the Obstinacy and Stupidity of the *Israelites*, such as Divorces upon the slightest Pretences; He enjoined many carnal Ordinances, of which the Prophet * *Ezekiel* says, by Order from GOD, that they were not *good* in themselves, nor acceptable to Him on any other Account, than as they were at *that Time* necessary to preserve them from imitating the Fashions of their Neighbouring Nations, and paying Divine Worship to Stocks and Stones. When they were well cured of this Inclination to worship the *DEITY* after the Manner of their Neighbours, as 'tis allowed on all Hands they were before our SAVIOUR'S coming amongst them, He then sent a Person to deliver them a more perfect Religion. When their Notions concerning the Nature of the Supreme BEING were improved by the spiritual Interpretations, which their Prophets from Time to Time gave of the Law of *Moses*, and by their Converse with the *Greek Philosophers*, which appears plainly by the

* Romans xi. 25.

† Ezekiel xx. 25.

Gurdon, Writings of those *Jews* that lived after the *Babylonish* Captivity, such as the SERM. Writers of the Book of *Wisdom*, *Ecclesiasticus*, and others, then *GOD* sent his XIV. Son to them, to teach them a more Spiritual Worship; a Worship or Honour more suitable to the real Nature of *GOD*, than entertaining Him, as they had hitherto done, with Sheep and Oxen, which *GOD* was pleased to accept at their Hands, 'till they were capable of knowing Him better. At this Time, 'tis to be particularly observed, That all Nations, as well as the *Jews*, viz. all that lived within the Bounds of the *Roman* Empire, or were Borderers upon it, had more or less profited by frequenting the Schools of the Philosophers, and Reading their *Ethical* and *Metaphysical* Lectures, in which they treated concerning the Nature of *GOD*, and the Excellency of Virtue, in a much clearer Manner than any *others*, in any *other* Parts of the World, had ever done before them. And tho' their Excellent Discourses were not sufficient for persuading People to give up the Established Religion; yet they prepared Mens Minds for receiving a better, whenever it should come to them well recommended.

WHEREAS the other Parts of the World which had no Commerce with the *Romans*, as far as we know any thing of them, were perfectly Barbarous, being ignorant of the first Rudiments of Religion; if they had any Traditions of the first Antiquity, yet they knew not how to make any Use of them, or draw any useful Conclusions from them, as *Dr. Burnet* observes*. Tho' the *Babylonians* and *Egyptians* had been in Possession of very ancient Traditions for many Ages, yet nothing of Use was drawn from them, 'till the *Greek* Philosophers undertook them, of which he gives one remarkable Instance, "That tho' these Nations had Records of all the *Eclipses* that had been from the Beginning of the World, yet they were never able to foretell an *Eclipse*; that this Discovery was reserved for *Thales*, who from their Historical Registers of past *Eclipses*, took the first Hint of calculating the Times of future ones." And therefore such Persons for Want of improving their Minds, would have been incapable of relishing a Religion so perfectly Rational as our Christian: It would have been casting Pearls before Swine, giving them what they would not have thanked *GOD* for, because too much above their Way of Thinking.

As to the *Americans*, we know not when that Continent was first peopled, or whether it was at all before our SAVIOUR'S Coming; for *Garcilasso* tells us when the *Spaniards* first came into the Southern Part of *America*, they could give no Account of themselves higher up than Five Hundred Years; the same we are told of the Northern Part, and therefore the Gospel not being preached in that Great Continent of *America* at the same Time, as it was in the *Roman* Empire, ought to be no Objection against it. I need not take any Notice of the Objection, as it concerns the *Scythians* or *Tartars*, because having none of their Histories to inform us of them, we are at full Liberty to suppose them as barbarous, and as unqualify'd for receiving Christianity, as we please.

THE only Nation which could pretend to any Degree of Politeness at that Time, and which had not the Gospel preached to them, were the *Chinese*: And yet how much soever the Literature of these People has been cried up, 'tis certain it was very mean. 'Tis plain they were very poorly skilled in *Metaphysics*, not having any Notion of a Supreme BEING; and this cannot be doubted. Since † Father *Martini* who was long in the Country, and well understood their Language, assures us, "That there was not a Name in the *Chinese* Language which would express the lowest Idea, which the most barbarous Nations had of a God:" And the *Syrian* Inscription, discovered in 1625, is a farther Proof of it: For tho' there had been *Syrian* Missionaries in that Country for above One Hundred Forty-six Years, and therefore some of them must have thoroughly understood the *Chinese* Language, yet when they were to erect a Monument with an Inscription for perpetuating the Memory of their Mission, they

* *Archæologia*, cap. 8. p. 72, 75.

† De summo ac primo rerum Authore mirum apud omnes Silentium; quippe in tam copiosa lingua, ne nomen quidem Deus habet. *Martini Historia Sinica*. Lib. I.

were

were forced to exprefs the Sovereign * *Being* by the *Syriack* Word *Alobo*, *Gurdon*.
 tho' every other Word of the Infcription is in the *Chinese* Language: S E R M
 Juft as the *Spaniards* use the Word *Dios* to instruct fuch of the *Ameri-* XIV.
cans, who have not any Idea of a *G O D*, or any Word in their Lan-
 guage by which to exprefs it. And therefore if any People were disqua-
 lified for receiving fo excellent an Institution as our *Christian*, the *Chinese* must
 be of that Number, as being ignorant of that which is prefupposed to every
 Revelation, the *Being* of a *G O D*, or a Free, Intelligent, and Powerful Agent.
 Whereas the *Greek* Philosophy, being spread over all the *Roman* Empire, had
 formed Mens Minds into a truer Way of thinking, and from thence infensibly
 led them into jufter Notions of Religion, than were to be met with in thofe
 Places where it was not known; and made them ready to embrace a Rati-
 onal Religion, as foon as it was propofed to them; which would be a fuffici-
 ent Reason why our Gospel fhould be preached to *them*, and not to the
Chinese, and other barbarous Nations. And therefore, for all this terrible
 Objection, a Revelation might have *G O D* for its Author, and be of ufe to
 Mankind, tho' all Nations were not at the fame Time favour'd with it.

HAVING fhewn fome of the Advantages of a Revelation, and that it
 may be of Ufe to Mankind, altho' no one Revelation has as yet been com-
 municated to *all*, and that 'tis poffible fuch Evidence may be given of a
 Revelation's being from *G O D*, as ought to fatisfye every reasonable Enquirer;
 nothing more feems to be neceffary, befides proving that our *Christian* is fup-
 ported by *fuch* Evidence.

IN the mean Time I fhall obferve, That it concerns every ferious Perfon,
 who does not believe *G O D* has communicated Himfelf by a Revelation, to
 examine carefully into the feveral Pretentions to Revelations: For fince there
 appears nothing unworthy of *G O D*, nothing but what highly becomes Him,
 as He is a Good and Gracious *B E I N G*, in communicating what would be a
 Benefit to his Creatures; it muft appear very probable, that He has before
 this Time made fome Revelation fome where or other. As the *Deift* has heard
 of the *Christian* Religion, I would particularly recommend *That* to his Con-
 fideration; and he will, if he be a ferious Perfon, think himfelf obliged, be-
 fore he fettles himfelf in *Deifm*, to confider carefully the Nature and Force of
 the Evidence by which 'tis fupported, and not, as a great Part of our *Deifts*,
 reject it merely for fuch Reasons, as muft affect Revelation in general. For
 if it were barely poffible, that the Goodnefs of *G O D* might have inclined
 him fome Time or other, to fupply the Defects of Natural Light by a Mes-
 fage from Heaven, it would be both our Duty and Intereft to enquire, Whe-
 ther he had done fo or not, and not offer to fhew our Wit againft the *Christian*
 Religion, as the Manner of fome is, before they have well confidered it, and
 found any Thing in either its Doctrines or Precepts that is unbecoming *G O D*
 to require of us. For fo much Refpect is due from us to every Thing that
 carries the Title of a Revelation from *G O D*, that we fhould give it a fair
 Hearing before we reject it; left haply while we may think we are Exposing
 and Laughing at a Cheat, we be found in *earnest* fighting againft *G O D*. So
 much Regard is due to our own Intereft, as not to make a Jelt of an Offer
 that may be to our Advantage, 'till we were fure that the Perfon who made
 the Offer in *G O D*'s Name, did it without his *Authority*. We only defire
 that the *Deift* would not laugh, before he knows what 'tis he laughs at;
 and then we are fure to hear no more from him of the Religious Books of
 the *Bramins*, *Perfee's*, and *Siamefe*, as Books of Equal Credit and Authority
 with thofe of our *Christian* Religion. For I am perfuaded he cannot mean,
 that all Religions are equally Rational, or equally ufefull to Mankind, (be-
 caufe if he knows any Thing, he knows they are not;) but he thinks that they
 are, and muft be all of equal Authority, one of them as much from *G O D*

Gurdon. as another, the same Evidence for one as another, that is, none at all. And
 SERM. the Reason given for this, is only this poor one, viz. That there is no di-
 XIV. stinguishing what we call Miracles from the meer Effects of Natural Causes,
 and then indeed there can be no knowing when GOD speaks, when not. If
 this be false, as I am fully persuaded it is, and have already shewn it to be
 so in a former Discourse*, then the *Deist* will one Day sorely repent of his
 having made a Sport of the Christian Religion, and will then call himself
 Fool, for not being able to distinguish between the Voice of GOD speaking
 to him in the Persons of CHRIST and *Lazarus* raised from their Graves,
 and when it only speaks to him in the most ordinary and common Acts of
 his Providence: He will then wish he had been more serious in a Concern of
 this Nature, and not jested, when he should have soberly examin'd, whether
 GOD had not spoken to him by his *Son*; whether there was not some Truth
 in what St. *Paul* told the *Corinthians* in the Words of my Text, that after the
 World had tired itself in seeking after GOD by the Help of Wisdom or Phi-
 losophy, it pleased God by a Revelation, or what some at that Time, and what he
 and his Brethren still call *Foolishness of Preaching*, to save them that believe.

* Sermon XII.

S E R M O N XV.

2 P E T. i. 16.

For we have not followed cunningly devised Fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, but were Eye-witnesses of his Majesty.

THE Writer of this Epistle in these Words endeavours to remove a *Gurdon*. Suspicion, as if he and the rest of his Brethren had magnified their Master's Performances. He tells those that should read this Epistle, that they had not drawn up, as some others, an artificial Account of Things, but had given them a plain Narrative of the Miraculous Powers which themselves had seen their LORD Exercising. That they had not, as the manner of some was, drest up a Life with a proper mixture of the *Marvelous* to set it off the better; for they had told them nothing concerning our SAVIOUR but what themselves had been Eye-witnesses to. And as another of the Disciples says *, *That which we have heard, which we have seen with our Eyes, which we have looked upon, and our Hands have handled. That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you.* And yet this plain and honest Declaration of these Apostles will not satisfy some Persons. They will not believe the Disciples ever saw any of these miraculous Works which, as they pretended, were done by their Master. I have already shewn, that if such uncommon Works, as are related in our Gospels, had been really done by Him, they would have been a good Proof of his Mission, and that the Religion He taught was from GOD: We have also seen † that our LORD's Disciples could not be imposed upon in the Account they have left us of those *uncommon* Works, by taking *Appearances* for *Realities*. The only remaining Difficulty is, to satisfy the Unbeliever, That they were Honest Men, and believed their own Account.

THIS leads me to the third Reason by which the *Deist* defends himself, in not examining into the Merits of any Revelation; because there are a great many Pretences to Revelation, and no certain *Criteria* whereby to distinguish the true one, if any such were, from Impostures; for that there will be always Reason for suspecting Persons that pretend to extraordinary Communications with Heaven: That to be the Heads of a Religious Party, is a tempting Consideration; if it meets with wished-for Success, Riches and Honours attend them: And therefore the Testimony of such Persons will be always suspicious; and then as much Reason for suspecting the Account given by the Apostles of our SAVIOUR's Miracles, as the fabulous Accounts contained in other Religions: which if true, would put the *Gospel* upon a Level with the *Zendt* of *Zoroaster*, the *Shaster* that contains the Religion of the *Indian Bramins*, or any other Book that pretends to be Divine. That by the Confession of Protestants, the Successors of the Apostles have invented many cunningly devised Fables of Miracles, and the *Deist* will not believe but that the

* 1 John i. 1, 3.

† See Sermon XII.

Gurdon. first Witnesses to Christianity, as well as those that came after them, might
 SERM. have some worldly Views in deceiving us; for besides the Honour of being
 XV. Heads of a Party, they had not much to lose, and were like to have a Chance
 for mending their Circumstances of Life.

I WILL therefore shew, That the Apostles, as Things *then* were, could lie under no Temptation of forging Miracles; and that 'tis altogether improbable they should intend to deceive us, by giving an Account of Things that they knew to be false; because supposing their Account of our SAVIOUR'S Miracles to be a false one, they would have had no Inducement for making a Profession of the Christian Religion, as they must see, if they saw at all, that the making such a Profession, would make them Abundance of Enemies, that would have the Power as well as the Will, to ill use them, and no Prospect of an Equivalent to balance Inconveniencies. Mankind does usually balance the Chances for Profit with those of Loss, and satisfy themselves, that what they aim at, is feasible, before they will undertake it: And therefore if the Apostles were Deceivers, they must have proposed to themselves an Advantage greater than the Pains they were to take, otherwise they would have been no better than Fools, which they cannot be supposed to have been by any that look into their Writings; besides, no body can believe, that a few Fools should be able to cheat all the Wise Men in the World. But as the State of Things was at that Time, there was no Ground for expecting any Profit or Advantage by Preaching the Religion, unless the Generality of those to whom they preached the *Gospel* received it, and that 'twas probable the Apostles would meet with such Success. But I will shew,

1st, THAT the Apostles could not possibly expect to live easy, unless they could reconcile the greatest Part of those, with whom they lived, to a liking of the *Gospel*.

2^{dly}, THAT there was no Probability that the *Gospel* would have any such Success, at least in their own Times; and who would care to have their Brains knock'd out for the Benefit of they did not know who, that were to succeed them?

1st, THE Apostles could not expect to live easy, unless they could reconcile the greatest Part of those they were obliged to converse with, to a liking of the *Gospel*. The World was then divided in Point of Religion into *Jews* and *Gentiles*. The Writers that are called profane, do agree with our Received *Gospels*, that at the Time when Christianity first appeared, the World, in Point of Religion, was divided into *Jews* and *Heathens* or *Pagans*. With Regard to the *Jews*, the Apostles could expect nothing from them, but the worst of Usage, as they were obliged to speak in the best Manner of that Person, whom the whole Nation of the *Jews* had treated as a Malefactor, and whose Crucifixion they had been very instrumental in procuring. They could not therefore but think they should draw upon themselves the utmost Displeasure of the *Jewish* Government, if they reflected upon its Proceedings; especially if they were to tell the People, as *Peter* did, That their Governors were either so weak, or so wicked, as to procure the Death of that Person, whom GOD had sent to be the Saviour of their Nation. And yet the Apostles spoke thus plainly, and in a publick Manner, as we see in the *Acts of the Apostles* *. The chief Priests and Elders must see, that there was no Way of keeping up their Authority, unless they could Silence these Persons, And the Apostles must see too, that they would stick at nothing to stop the Progress of this Sect. The Apostles also could not but know, that a People so tenacious of the Ceremonies of their Religion, would never endure any Persons, if they offered to depreciate them, or draw Men off from their Esteem of them; they might reasonably fear their MASTER'S Prediction would prove true, That those who killed them, would think that they did GOD good Service. The Account which is given of the *Jews*, by such Writers as lived near the Time when the

* Chap. ii. 36.

Gospel was first Preached, sufficiently shews their Fondness for the Ceremonies of *Gurdon*. their Religion. *Juvenal* tells us, That they would not shew the most common S E R M. XV. Acts of Civility, such as the putting a Man right, when he was out of his Way, or directing him to a Place, where he might find Water, to any but such as were of the *same* Religion *. And we may observe from *Horace*, That they were taken Notice of in his Time, as a Sect of Religion that was most industrious in making Profelytes †. We may easily guess, and so might the Apostles, what sort of Entertainment they were to meet with from a People so much wedded to their own Religion. And tho' the Apostles *at first* allowed Conyerts from *Judaism* to retain many of the Ceremonies of their Religion, together with Christianity, and were even so complaisant to them, as to oblige the *Gentile* Conyerts to abstain from some Things that were most disagreeable to the *Jews*, such as the eating Things that had been offered to Idols, and Blood, yet there was no Reason to think that these Allowances would satisfy the *Jews*; because they must see that the main Part of their Religion, the Temple-Service, must sink, if Christianity prevailed, and that the Apostles only permitted, without laying any Strefs upon, any other Ceremonies of their Religion.

N E I T H E R could the Apostles look for any better Quarter from the *Gentiles*; especially if they offered to make any Profelytes from that Religion: They must foresee, that they should be hated by them, for making Profession of a Religion different from their own, as they saw their own Countrymen, the *Jews*, were universally detested by them for the same Reason. And that Reasons of State as well as those of Religion, would oblige every *Heathen* Government to suppress, if possible, those that opposed the established Superstition, and to take away the Lives and Liberties of such, as would be judged by *them* Disturbers of the State, for endeavouring to carry off Mens Minds from the Government-Worship. And we find in Fact that Christians were so generally hated at *Rome*, when Christianity first appeared there, that when the City was set on Fire by *Nero*, and the People generally believed it was done by his Order, yet they were pleased to see the Christians suffer as Incendiaries. For *Tacitus* tells us, " That when *Nero* laid the burning of the City to the Christians Charge, they were not so much found Guilty by any Force of Evidence, as by the Universal Abhorrence which every Body had of that Sort of People †". People believed them innocent as to the Firing of *Rome*, and yet were pleased to see them punished as Incendiaries: It was not much doubted, as *Tacitus* tells us, That *Nero* himself was the Incendiary; and yet the Aversion was so strong against the Christians, that the Compassion which usually attends upon the miserable, when they are believed to be innocent, could not be raised by all their Sufferings: And therefore 'tis plain whilst this Aversion lasted, there could be no Hopes for the Apostles of living tolerably easy with them. But,

2dly, I A M now to consider whether they could have any Probability of converting, at their first setting out, such a Number of *Gentiles* and *Jews*, as would secure them, for the rest of their Life, from the Ill-will of those that continued in their *Infidelity*, and reward them too for the Pains they had taken in converting them. The only Pretence for suspecting the Apostles Honesty must be, that they might have an Eye to the Profits and Emoluments, which many of their Successors met with. That *St. Peter* might dream of faring as well as the best of his Successors at *Rome* have done. So *Porphyry* would have it thought, That those who pretended to Miracles, by which he means Christians, were tempted by a Prospect of Profit to turn Christians ||. But we have

* Non monstrare Vias, eadem nisi sacra colenti,
Quæsitum ad fontem solos deducere Verpos.
Juvenal Sat. 14. v. 103, 4.

† Ac veluti te
Judæi, cogemus in hanc concedere turbam.
Horat. Lib. I. Sat. 4. v. 143.

‡ Conviçti odio humani Generis. *Tacit. Annal. Lib. XV.*

|| Homines rusticani & pauperes, quoniam nihil habebant, Magicis artibus operati sunt quædam Signa. *Hieron. Breviarium Psalterii, Psalm. lxxxi.*

Gurdon. already seen that this could not possibly enter into their Heads, unless they be-
 S E R M. lieved they should quickly convert such Numbers, as would be able to support
 XV. them against all Opposition. But the Improbability of such quick Conversions
 will easily appear, if we consider,

1st, T H E Nature of the Religion to which they were to convert them, together with the State of Virtue and Vice, as it was when they began to preach the Gospel. And

2^{dly}, T H E Difficulty of Imposing upon the World at *that* Time, when they began to preach the Gospel, by false Miracles or a Supposititious Resurrection.

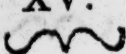
1st, L E T us consider the Nature of the Religion to which they were to convert the *Jew* or *Gentile*, and how they were disposed at that Time for receiving such a Religion.

E V E R Y one knows the Difficulty of persuading Numbers of Men to quit their Opinions in Religion; tho' they be never so weak and indefensible, if they have been for a long Time the Religious Profession of the Country where they live. And 'tis as well known that the Difficulty will be greater, if the Religion they are to be converted to, flatters none of the Vices of Mankind; and the Difficulty still encreases, when the Persons that are to be converted to such a Religion, are notoriously bad Livers. If this was the true State of the Matter, it must be allowed that the Apostles, supposing them to have common Understanding, could not flatter themselves with the Hopes of many Converts. That the Doctrine which the Apostles preached, such as we have it in the Gospels, (and I shall afterwards prove that we have that Gospel such as it was preached by the Apostles *) does not indulge Men in any irregular Behaviour, how agreeable soever to the Passions and Appetites of Mankind, cannot be denied by any *Deist* that has ever read the Gospels; they cannot deny that the Gospel contains a more perfect Morality, than ever appeared before in the World: And that it requires the Practice of every Thing that deserves the Name of Virtue, and forbids every Appetite and Passion of corrupted Nature; so far I mean as such Appetite and Passion are Effects of the Corruption of our Natures. It does not allow Men to commute for Internal Goodness by External Performances; it proposes no Advantage to any Body upon any better Terms, than those of parting with every vicious Inclination, and becoming truly good and virtuous Persons. It was a meer Slander which *Celsus*, and afterwards *Julian*, cast upon the Christian Religion, as if it drew People into it, by promising them an Expiation of all Crimes how great soever, if they would only perform some External Acts †, such as beating the Head, and thumping the Breast, without any real Change of their Way of Life. For every one that reads our *New Testament* must see, that this *last* was chiefly insisted upon by the Apostles. And *Julian* too, as he was once of the Religion, might have known, from the Twelfth and Thirteenth Canons of the famous Council of *Nice*, that the Church in his Time did require a good Life, as a necessary Part of Repentance, and not meerly those External Signs of it. Whatever Relaxations may have been since allowed of, will not at all affect my Argument, which is drawn from the Religion such as it was preached by the *Apostles*.

I F we look into the State of Mankind at that Time, we shall find the *Jews* so attached to the Out-side of their Religion, that they had almost lost the Spirit of it. Then there would be small Hopes of persuading such Persons to part with their Ceremonies, the only Cloak for their Wickedness, for a Religion that required a sincere and unaffected Goodness. And as little could the Apostles hope for Success among the *Greeks* and *Romans*; for all the Historians who have left us any Account of those Times, give such a Character of the Corruptions that generally prevailed in them, as would make any Man, who had the least Remains of Virtue left, to detest them. A Religion that enjoins its Followers to moderate their Desires of *Worldly Things*, would never suit the Taste of

* See Sermon XVI.

† Vide *Juliani Cæsares*.

such an Age. A Voluptuous, Ambitious, or Covetous Man would never bear *Gurdon.* the Restraints, which the Gospel lays upon Mens Inclinations; and therefore the *SERM.* Apostles could not expect to make many Profelytes out of this Kind of People, *XV.* and yet this was the general Character of the Age. 

BUT it may be said, that tho' the Nature of the Religion was forbidding enough to a bad Liver, yet they might flatter themselves, that it would quickly make its Way in the World, by the over-bearing Weight of those astonishing Facts, which they related concerning the Author or first Publisher of it, as they knew Mankind, especially the lower Part of it, with whom the Apostles succeeded best, was always apt to be much affected with Prodigies and marvelous Relations.

I WILL therefore shew, *2dly*, The extreme Difficulty which the Apostles must have met with at the Time when they began to preach the *Gospel*, had they intended to impose upon the World by *false* Miracles or a *supposititious* Resurrection. The Impostures and forged Miracles, that were pretended to some Ages after the Times of the Apostles, have led many Persons into a Suspicion, as if the Miracles which the Apostles relate, as performed by our SAVIOUR and themselves, might be of the same Sort. But if we consider the different Circumstances the Apostles were in from those of their Successors, who palmed upon the World many *cunningly devised Fables*, we shall find that nothing was easier, than for them to make the World believe, or at least seem to believe, fictitious Miracles; and nothing harder than for the Apostles to have succeeded with such Miracles. Which will be made evident by considering,

1st, THE Circumstances of the Persons that were to carry on the Cheat And,

2dly, THE People that were to be cheated.

1st, THE Persons that were to carry on the Cheat. The Number of them was no less than Twelve; if they were to be employed as Witnesses of a Matter of Fact, we would not desire fewer; but they were too many if they were to be intrusted with a Secret. They must be mad that should embark in such a Design with so great a Number, and believe that a Secret could be kept by so many Persons, when any of them might have made his Fortune by betraying it, and had Reason to fear Gibbets and Crosses for keeping it. And yet had any one of them been tempted by Promises or Threatnings to discover the Secret, the Design had been ruined beyond Recovery, and all their Hopes of making Converts extinguished. The Apostles therefore must have been very weak Men, instead of being Crafty Men, as the Objection supposes them to be, had they built their Hopes of Success upon such a sandy Foundation. Especially too, if we consider the Persons themselves, as well as the Number of them. Men who by the Account they give of themselves, had all forsaken their *Master*, as soon as the *Jewish* Government laid hold on Him; even the Person that appeared to have the most Courage, and Love for his *Master*, when he saw Him charged with Capital Crimes, for Fear of suffering with Him, denied he had any Knowledge of Him. Such Persons, I say, that had not Courage enough to stand by a Truth, cannot be supposed fit Instruments for carrying on a Cheat: As they would in all Probability squeak, as soon as their Lives were in Danger; for certain they could never have trusted one another, after they had so notorious a Proof of their Unfaithfulness to their *Master*: For why should they suppose they could stand more courageously by one another, than they had done by their *Master*, whom they disowned at the first approach of Danger? And no Body can believe that the Apostles would have given so scandalous an Account of their own Behaviour, had it not been true.

WHEREAS those who *afterwards* counterfeited Miracles, if they had the Ill-luck to be discovered, ran no Hazard of either Life or Fortune. The Christian Religion had *then* the Support and Encouragement of the Civil Government, and therefore whatever was done in Favour of it, would pass for a pious Zeal for the Service of GOD and CHRIST: There would be little Reason to fear, that those who were concerned in the Cheat, whatever their
Numbers

Gurdon. Numbers were, should make a Discovery of it, because there would be no worldly Motives to betray one another: For if the Miracle succeeded, they

XV. might hope to be Gainers by it; and if it was discovered, they had nothing worse to fear, than that some People might say of them, That they had more Zeal than Understanding. And therefore 'tis a groundless Suspicion which is drawn from the Counterfeit Miracles of the VIth, and following Centuries to the Miracles of our SAVIOUR and his Apostles. But,

2dly, IF we consider the People that were to be cheated, the Case of the Apostles and their Successors was very different.

1st, As the Persons that were to believe their Account of Miracles, were Enemies to the Christian Religion.

2dly, As they were better able in their Time to distinguish fictitious from real Miracles.

1st, As the Persons that were to believe their Account of Miracles, were Enemies to the Christian Religion, and as *such*, would not easily give Credit to those Miracles which were to be the chief Support of that Religion. It is natural to believe that those who hated the Religion, would be no Friends to Miracles, because these were to give it a Reputation in the World. The Apostles who must see that nothing but the Force of Evidence would work upon them, would have therefore little Reason for hoping that their Miracles, if *counterfeit*, should pass the Examination of such prejudiced Persons; whereas those who boasted of Miracles in some particular Ages of the Church, did it among such as were Friends to Christianity, and wished to have the same Evidence given to it in their Times, as had been in those of the Apostles. And therefore such Persons being prepossess'd in Favour of them, there would be little Difficulty in imposing false Miracles upon them. They knew that such Persons would wish, for the Honour of the Religion, that their Miracles were *true* ones; and therefore would not be too curious in examining, for fear they should find it to be otherwise than they wished for. Besides,

2dly, THERE was another Disadvantage which the Apostles lay under, which was that they lived in a discerning and inquisitive Age, that would not take Things upon Trust, because well able to distinguish *Fictions* from *Realities*. When the Apostles first began to preach the Gospel, most Parts of Learning were in as great a Degree of Perfection as they had ever been before; The Inquiries into *Nature* and its several Powers, carried to a very great Height, when compared with some succeeding Ages. And therefore the World would have been much better qualified for distinguishing the *Natural* from the *Marvelous*. The Apostles, considering their Education, could not hope to impose upon such a People, or if they had been so vain to attempt it, must have been quickly convicted of an Imposture. If it be said that they began with the lower Part of the World, and made Converts at first of such as were very ignorant, which *Celsus* charges upon them; supposing it to be true, that they at first made Converts of only the lower Part, which yet is false; it cannot be supposed that the upper Part of the World would sit idle, and let them carry People off from the Established Worship, had they been able to detect them of any Fraud. We find by *Pliny's* Letter to *Trajan*, That the Great Men spared neither Cost nor Pains, neither Promises nor Threats, to make the Christians confess or own a Cheat. If the Apostles had been Men of so much Cunning as the Objection supposes, they would have been discouraged from undertaking a Cheat in so unreasonable a Time. The proper Times for Imposture are Times of Ignorance, when any Thing unusual may be made to pass for a *true* Miracle, and Persons are ready to believe any Thing strange that is told them, and the more unlikely to be true, the more forward in believing. Such are the Times in which Fraud and Impostures are wont to thrive, and such were the Times, when to the Shame of Christians, *counterfeit* Miracles crept into the Church of GOD: And the Histories of those Times shew that the Pretences to Miracles were multiplied, in Proportion as the Ignorance of the People encreas'd. And therefore tho' latter Ages might carry on Cheats successfully, it does not follow that the Apostles

could

could hope to do so: Or because some of the Successors of St. Peter in a *dark* *Gurdon*. Age, might make People believe they work'd Miracles when they did not, that St. Peter in a *Critical* Age might have made the World believe the Resurrection of our SAVIOUR, altho' in *Reality* no such Thing had been. SERM. XV.

THUS I have shewn that the Apostles could propose no worldly Advantage to themselves by embracing the Christian Religion; as they could not reasonably expect to make Converts of the greatest Part of the *Roman* Empire, or to get the Christian to be the Established Religion in their own Times; and that unless this could be effected, they must, instead of Honours and Emoluments, expect the worst of Treatment from both *Jew* and *Gentile*, and that if they built their Hopes of Success upon pretending to a Power of working Miracles, that there was not any Likelyhood they would be able to make *false* Miracles pass for true Ones, with Persons prejudic'd against the Belief of them. Such Persons too as had Abilities sufficient for distinguishing *Realities* from *Impostures*. These are such Difficulties attending the *Deist's* Supposition of the Apostles being Deceivers; so irreconcilable with the usual Workings of the Human Nature, that we ought to believe them sincere Persons.

IF it be said that the Apostles might please themselves with being Heads of a Party, and in Course esteem'd by such as they could bring into it; which is the only possible Inducement left them; This is such thin Diet, as would never support a Man against the Difficulties which the Apostles expected, and actually met with: For what Inducement would it be, to be esteemed by a small Number of Persons, almost all of them of mean Condition; and at the same Time to be despised by the rest of the World; and not only despised, but persecuted even to Death. Whatever Pride and Vanity there may be in our Natures, yet no Man of Common Sense can think the Esteem of a few *mean* Persons, a sufficient Recompence for being scorned and despised by almost all those who had any Character for Reputation in the World. Had the Desire of Glory been their Motive for Preaching the Gospel, they must have been quickly discouraged, when they saw themselves treated with greater Contempt than any other Sort of Men, meerly for Preaching it. They must have given over the Attempt when they found nothing got by it, but the Reputation of being Persons that were either mad or very wicked. St. Paul tells us they were looked upon as *Fools for CHRIST's Sake* *, that they were exposed in the Theatres to be a *Spectacle to the People* †, as profane Persons, that were Enemies to all Religion; they were first laugh'd at and then put to Death. Those who can believe, that any Persons can be tickled with such Sort of Fame, may believe any Thing: And therefore the *Deist* labours in vain, whilst he endeavours to persuade himself and others, that the Apostles were Deceivers.

THE only Refuge left him would be this: That the Apostles preached no such Religion at the Time set down in the Writings of the *New Testament*, but that the whole was a fictitious Account of Things and Persons, published some Years after that Time, when it would not be easy to confute the Publishers. But 'tis impossible this should be true, because if the first Publication of the Religion had been some Years after that Time which the Scriptures mention, as those Scriptures expressly say the Gospel had been preached some Years before this Publication of it, and in so Publick a Place as *Jerusalem*, the Metropolis of *Judea*, and the *Jews* dispersed over the *Roman* Empire; every one must presently have found it to be a Cheat, because the *Jews* could have told them, they had never before heard of any such Religion preached in their Country. But we are further assured that the Gospel was not *first* preached some Years after the Time set down in the *New Testament*, because we have an *Heathen* Author of good Credit, that was born but a few Years after the first Preaching of it; who speaking of the Beginning of Christianity tells us, "That the Author of this Sect was CHRIST; who in the Reign of *Tiberius* was put to Death by *Pontius Pilate*, Governor of *Judea*," which agrees with the Times given

* 1 Cor. iv. 10.
VOL. III.

† *Ibid.* ver. 9.
5 G

Gurdon. by the Sacred Writers: And then he says, "Tho' it was thus nipped in the Bud
SERM. " by putting the Author to Death, yet it broke out anew, and spread not only

XV. " through *Judea*, but reached even unto *Rome* itself *." This Author was too
exact an Historian to give a false Account of the Original of a Sect, which was
so near his own Time. But I shall say no more to this Objection of the *Deist*,
because it would be doing it too much Honour to discover all its Weaknesses.

HAVING now shewn, That the first Preachers of the *Gospel* could not be
Deceivers, supposing the *Gospel* to have been Preached about that Time, that
the Writers of the *New Testament* tell us: That the Reason of the Thing,
shews it must have been Preached at that Time; that the Testimony of an
Author that was an Enemy to the Christian Religion confirms it: Having also
shewn before, That if the Apostles were sincere Persons, they could not be de-
ceived in the Relation they gave of our SAVIOUR'S Miracles, by taking mere
Appearances for Realities: And that such Extraordinary Works as they relate,
must have the immediate Power of GOD for the Author of them; we have
then a solid Foundation for the Divine Authority of our Christian Religion to
rest upon; as it cannot be supposed that GOD would have Countenanced it in
so extraordinary a Manner, if it had not been from Heaven; especially when the
Religion itself lays Claim to such an Original: Nothing more can be necessary
for justifying the Faith of a Christian, and at the same Time exposing the Un-
believer, for making Difficulties in Religious Belief his Reason for not receiving
our Christian Revelation, than shewing what Assurance we have, that the
Writings of the *New Testament* or our Four *Gospels*, do contain a true Ac-
count of the Christian Religion, such as it was at first Preached by the Apostles.
And the Ground for any Doubt in this Case is, Because many Persons did put
out *Gospels* in the Names of the Apostles, to give them the greater Credit, and
perhaps those we have may be of that Sort; that some of those that have born
the Name of an Apostle, have differed in some very material Passages from the
Received *Gospels*. However, supposing the Books we have were writ by those
whose Names they bear, what Assurance have we that many considerable Altera-
tions have not been made in them, considering the Malice and Carelesness of
Transcribers, and the Number of Copies which have been taken, since the Ori-
ginals of the Apostles were first Published. The Answer to these Difficulties
will be seen in the following Discourse.

* Tacitus Annal. Lib. XV.

S E R M O N XVI.

2 P E T. i. 16.

For we have not followed cunningly devised Fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, but were Eye-witnesses of his Majesty.

IT must be allowed that the Disciples of our LORD, as they were Eye-witnesses, were best able to give us a faithful History of the Actions of their Master. And the Writers of *Apocryphal* Books plainly shew the Opinion the World had *then* of an History of our SAVIOUR writ by them; since they knew no better Way of gaining Credit to their *Gospels*, than that of affixing the Name of some Apostle to them; and as we have proved them to be Honest Men, nothing more can be necessary for clearing our *Gospels* from any Suspicion of being *cunningly devised Fables*, but shewing *their* Agreement with what was Preached by the *Apostles*. Gurdon. S E R M. XVI.

I WILL therefore shew, 1st, That we have good Reason to believe, that the *Received Gospels* were either writ, or allowed of by some Apostle.

2^{dly}, THAT there is no good Evidence that any of the *Apocryphal Gospels* were writ by that Apostle or Apostles, whose Name they bear: And how it might come to pass that they were received by *some*, as the Writings of an Apostle, and yet be afterwards rejected.

1st, I AM to shew, That we have good Reason for believing that the *Received Gospels* were either writ, or allowed of by some Apostle. In proving this Proposition.

I WILL shew 1st, That there were *Gospels* written from the Beginning of Christianity, by the Persons whose Names we have at the Head of our *Gospels*.

2^{dly}, THAT those of them which bear not the Name of an Apostle, (as *Mark* and *Luke*) were always supposed to have been seen and allowed of by some Apostle.

3^{dly}, THAT the *Gospels* which are come down to our Times, were *theirs*, and not any *Apocryphal Gospels*.

1st, THAT there were *Gospels* written from the Beginning of Christianity, by the Persons whose Names we have at the Head of our *Gospels*. This is a Matter of Fact, and must therefore be determined by such Writers, as lived nearest to the Times of their being first published. If we can shew, that both those *Heretical* Christians, who did not in all Points approve of *these Gospels*, and made use of *others*, did yet allow them to be written by those Persons, as well as *those* Christians who made Use of no others, we shall sufficiently prove that *these* Persons did write those *Gospels*. To begin with the *Orthodox*, or such as allowed them in all Respects to be genuine. We find by *Irenæus* *, a Person curious in enquiring into Matters of this Nature, who flourished in the II^d Century, that *St. Matthew put out a Gospel, after him St. Mark, then St. Luke, and*

* Irenæus edit. Massuet. pag. 174.

Gurdon. last of all St. John. After him *Eusebius* *, who took great Pains in searching for
 S E R M. all Sorts of Writings from the very Beginning of Christianity, whether Friends
 XVI. or Enemies, tells us, That the Four *Gospels* were ἐν ὁμολογούμενοις, among such
 Books as were on all Hands allowed to be writ by those Persons whose Names
 are prefixed to them. It is needless to mention any more Authorities of this
 Kind, because the Church which used these *Gospels*, must be supposed to believe
 them written by those Persons.

AND therefore I shall proceed to the *Heretical* Christians, whose Testimony
 will be more considerable, as these *Gospels* did in many Places oppose some or
 other of their particular Opinions; and yet we find these *Gospels* were in such
 an universal Esteem, that the earliest Hereticks found it necessary to have Re-
 course to them, and to defend their Opinions by the Authority of these *Gospels*,
 as *Irenæus* assures us †, “ That the Authority of these *Gospels* is so firmly Estab-
 lished, that even Heretical Christians could not dispute it, and were con-
 tented to support, as well as they could, their particular Opinions by them.
 “ That the *Ebionites* defended themselves by *St. Matthew’s Gospel*; the *Marcio-*
nites by that of *St. Luke*: Another Heresy (whose Name he does not tell us)
 “ justified their Opinions by *St. Mark’s Gospel*; and the *Valentinians* by that of
 “ *St. John*.” That these last received *St. John’s Gospel*, because they thought
 the First Chapter of *St. John* was a Confirmation of their Notion of the *Æons*
being in Pairs. Thus we find the most early Hereticks endeavouring to defend
 themselves by the Authority of these *Gospels*.

I AM aware it has been question’d, whether the *Ebionites* made use of *St. Matthew’s Gospel*, or whether it was another *Gospel*, which was commonly called
 according to the *Hebrews*; which if true, *Irenæus* was deceived in saying,
 That the Four *Gospels* were confirmed by the Testimony of Hereticks; since one
 of them, viz. *St. Matthew’s* would not have had any such Confirmation. That
 we may give a distinct Answer to this Objection, it must be observ’d, that if the
Gospel of *St. Matthew* was writ by him in *Hebrew* or *Syriack* (which the ear-
 liest Writers affirm) it must have been for the Benefit of such Persons, as under-
 stood those Languages, and not the *Greek*: That those Persons were the *Jews* in
Palestine, that the first Converts to Christianity were made from these *Jews*;
 that such were for some Time called *Nazarenes*; that the *Ebionites* were *Syrian*
Jews too, and only distinguished from them by a different Name, on account of
 some Errors which they fell into; that the ancient Ecclesiastical Writers have
 believed the *Gospel* used ‡ by the *Nazarenes* to be the true *Gospel* of *St. Matthew*,
 and at the same Time tell us ||, That the *Ebionites* made use of the same *Gospel*
 with these *Nazarenes*; that unless the *Nazarenes* and *Ebionites* did make use of
 this *Gospel* of *St. Matthew* in *Hebrew*, we can scarce find any Christians that did;
 but no one would believe that an Apostle should write a *Gospel* which no Body
 read; that unless the *Gospel* used by these Persons was *St. Matthew’s Gospel*, it
 must have been entirely lost within a few Years after it was published. For
 neither *St. Jerom* nor *Origen* before him were able to find any other *Hebrew*
Gospel of *St. Matthew*, than what was in Use amongst these Persons; and it can-
 not be said that it was neglected, and so lost because no Body wanted it; for
 we are certain that the *Syrian* or *Syro-Chaldaick* Language which was called
Hebrew †, continued for some Ages after their Times, to be the Language best
 known in that Country: It being the Mother Language of that Country, till

* Euseb. Hist. Ecclesiast. Lib. III. cap. 25.

† Tanta est autem circa hæc Evangelia firmitas, ut & ipsi Hæretici testimonium reddant eis, & ex ipsis egrediens unusquisque eorum, conetur suam confirmare doctrinam. Ebionæi etenim eo Evangelio quod est secundum Matthæum solo utentes, ex illo ipso convincuntur. Marcion autem id, quod est secundum Lucam, circumcidens, ex his quæ adhuc servantur penes eum, blasphemus in Deum ostenditur. Qui autem Jesum separant a Christo, & impassibilem perseverasse Christum, passum vero Jesum dicunt, id quod secundum Marcum est præferentes Evangelium: Hi autem qui a Valentino sunt, eo quod est secundum Johannem plenissime utentes ad ostensionem conjugationum suarum. Irenæus, p. 190.

‡ Epiphanius Hæres. 29. n. 9. Ἐχόντι δὲ τὸ κατὰ Ματθαῖον εὐαγγέλιον πληρέστατον Ἑβραϊστί.

|| In Evangelio quo utuntur Nazareni & Ebionitæ, quod nuper in Græcum Sermonem transtulimus, quod vocatur a plerisque Matthæi Authenticum. Hieron. Com. in Matt. xii. Idem in Catalogo Scriptor. Ecclesiast.

† Acts xxi. 40.

the Religion of *Mahomet* prevailed, which was long after St. *Jerom* lived. Be- *Gurdon*. fides, it is confess'd by all, that there was a *Gospel* in the *Hebrew* or *Syriack* in *SERM.* Use among some Christians in St. *Jerom*'s Time, and therefore the *Hebrew Gos-* XVI. *pel* of St. *Matthew* would not have been, what this Objection supposes, useless. If it be asked how 'tis possible the *Gospel* used by the *Nazarenes* and *Ebionites*, should be generally reckoned in *Eusebius*'s Time among Apocryphal Books, if it had been really writ by St. *Matthew*; the Answer is, that those who make this Objection do not, as Father *Simon* observes, duly reflect upon the Original State of Christians. The Primitive Christians of *Jerusalem* and *Palestine*, who made use of this *Hebrew Gospel*, having not long subsisted in their first Estate, and the others on the contrary who spake *Greek* being dispers'd through the whole Earth, it hath from thence happened that the *Greek Gospel* only was generally known, and therefore generally allowed of; because all the other Christians had taken their *Versions* from this Copy. Whereas the *Chaldaick* Tongue, in which the *Gospel* of the *Nazarenes* was writ, was only understood by some *Jews*. And besides, the *Nazarenes* who had retained *Judaism* with *Christianity*, became odious to the other Christians who were converted from *Gentilism*, and there was an irreconcilable Hatred between them; and then no wonder if some *Gentile* Christians were not for allowing such *bated* Persons the Honour of using St. *Matthew*'s *Gospel*.

ALL then that can be urged with any shew of Reason, by such as deny that the *Nazarenes* and *Ebionites* made use of the *Hebrew Gospel* of St. *Matthew*, would be this, That those Writers who affirmed that St. *Matthew* writ this *Gospel* in *Hebrew*, were deceived. And yet we know that *Papias* * in the *East*, who conversed with the Disciples of the Apostles, and was very inquisitive to know what they said or did, tells us positively, that St. *Matthew* writ his *Gospel* in *Hebrew*; he speaks of it as a Matter of Fact that was not at that Time doubted of. St. *Irenæus* in the *West* says, St. *Matthew*, being among the *Hebrews*, writ his *Gospel* in their Dialect †; and others says St. *Matthew* writ it in that Language for the Sake of such *Syrian Jews* converted to Christianity, as were ignorant of the *Greek* Tongue ‡. But for all this Evidence, the many Additions and Differences from the *Greek* of St. *Matthew*, found in the *Gospel* used by the *Nazarenes* and *Ebionites*, have made many believe, that they did not use St. *Matthew*'s *Gospel*. Whereas they ought to consider (especially as the Evidence is so strong against them) that those Additions and Alterations might be owing to the Custom of those Times, when Christians took a great deal of Pains to inform themselves of what the Disciples of the Apostles had learn'd from their Masters, as appears by *Papias* ||; and to preserve them would probably put them down between the Lines, and at the Margin of their Copy of the *Gospel*, from whence such Interlineations and Marginal Notes might by Degrees slip into the *Text*, and so become Part of the *Gospel* itself. Many Alterations too might have been introduced by the *Ebionites* into their Copies, with a Design to favour some of the peculiar Opinions of their Sect. I am persuaded there is more Probability that those Alterations which were found in some Copies of St. *Matthew*'s *Hebrew Gospel*, (as appears by some Passages St. *Jerom* has quoted from it,) might have been introduced in some such Way, than that all the Ecclesiastical Writers who have spoken of this Matter, even the earliest of them, should be deceived in these two Matters of Fact, viz. That St. *Matthew* writ his *Gospel* in *Hebrew*, and that the *Hebrew Gospel* which the *Nazarenes* and *Ebionites* made use of, was St. *Matthew*'s *Gospel*. As to those who deny the first of these, *Grotius* scruples not to say, *Nullis justis de Causis maximam pie antiquitatis Consensionem repudiant* †.

BUT it may be said that if these Hereticks did quote the *Gospel* of St. *Matthew*, as well as the other Hereticks did the other *Gospels*, that this would only prove that such *Gospels* with such Titles were in their Times: But that their

* Eusebius. Lib. III. cap. 39.

† Epiphani. Hæres. 51.

‡ Euseb. H. E. Lib. III. cap. 8.

|| Euseb. Lib. V. cap. 39.

† Com. in Math. cap. 1.

Gurdon. not receiving them, should seem to prove that those, which each rejected, were
 SERM. not thought by them to be writ or authoriz'd by an Apostle; that they only
 XVI. made use of them to defend their own Opinions against the *Orthodox*, who al-
 lowed them to be writ by those Persons, whose Names they bear. The Answer
 to this is, That we cannot find any of these Hereticks ever denied these *Gospels*
 being wrote by those Persons, even when they were hard press'd to reconcile
 their Opinions with these *Gospels*. If there had been the least Suspicion whe-
 ther *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke* and *John* had writ any *Gospels*, there would have
 been an easy Answer to the *Orthodox*, in telling them that it was doubtful whe-
 ther the *Gospels*, which opposed their Opinions, were writ by those Persons.
 But when the Church press'd them with Passages, drawn from these *Gospels*,
 they answered them either by giving a different Sense to the Words, if they
 would admit any; or by denying those Words to belong to the Writer of the
Gospel; for some of them, as particularly the *Marcionites*, struck out of their
 Copies of the *Gospel*, whatever was offensive to them, as we have already seen
 by *Irenæus*: Or else they defended themselves by quoting some Apocryphal *Gos-
 pel*, which in an Age not over Critical, they found to be of great Service to
 them: for by prefixing the Name of an Apostle to *Gospels* of their own putting
 out in Favour of their particular Opinions, they set up the Authority of one
 Apostle against another. This shews that in the earliest Times of Christianity,
 when their Spuriousness might have been detected, there was no Possibility of
 disputing, whether Four *Gospels* were writ by those, whose Names they bore.

2dly, I AM to shew now, That such of the *Gospels* as bear not the Name of
 an Apostle, viz. *Mark* and *Luke*, were always supposed to have been seen and
 allowed of by some Apostle. To begin with St. *Mark*. He is said by *Irenæus* to
 have been a Follower of St. *Peter*, and an Interpreter of his Sermons: And
 one that was antienter, being a Contemporary with the immediate Disciples of
 the Apostles, * *Papias*, says, "That *Mark*, who was *Peter's* Interpreter, had
 "written exactly all that he had retained in his Memory, without observing
 "the Order of the Words and Actions of JESUS CHRIST; for he had not
 "himself heard JESUS CHRIST, not having followed Him; but he had fol-
 "lowed *Peter*, who Preached to the People, according as their Necessities re-
 "quired." *Clemens Alexandrinus* tells us, That St. *Mark*, who for a long Time
 followed *Peter*, put into Writing the *Gospel* which St. *Peter* had Preached at
 the Request of the Faithful, and that this *Gospel* was approved by St. *Peter*;
 for the Truth of which *Eusebius* brings not only *Clemens*, but *Papias* to be his
 Vouchers †. If in his ‡ VIth Book he quotes the same *Clemens* for saying, that
Peter neither approved, nor disallowed of St. *Mark's Gospel*, *Valesius* in his *Notes*
 upon the Place tells us, That this is easily reconciled; because in the VIth Book
 he speaks only of a publick Approbation of this *Gospel*, and in the IIld Book of
 what Encouragement St. *Peter* gave to it in private amongst his Friends. As
 for St. *Luke*, we find by *Origen* and *Eusebius*, that it was the general Opinion
 of Christians, That St. *Paul* meant his *Gospel*, when he said of him, "Luke the
 "beloved Physician, whose Praise is in the *Gospel*." If this were true, we have
 the Approbation of an Apostle given to his *Gospel*, and an Answer to *Amyntor*,
 when he asks us, "Why we do not receive the *Epistles* of *Barnabas* and *Clemens*
 "among the Canonical Books, as well as *Mark* and *Luke*, since the first were as
 "much Companions and Fellow-Labourers with the Apostles as the latter?"
 And the Answer is this; That these *Gospels* were not only composed by such as
 had been Companions with an Apostle, but were also believed to have received
 the Allowance of some Apostle. So *Eusebius* tells us, That 'twas commonly be-
 lieved ||, St. *John* look'd over the three *Gospels* of *Matthew*, *Mark* and *Luke*,
 and approved of them. But there is no Evidence pretended for the *Epistles* of
Barnabas and *Clemens* being approved by any Apostles. Some have even questi-

* Marcus Interpres & Sectator Petri. Irenæus. pag. 187. Vide Euseb. Hist. Eccles. Lib. III. c. 39.

† Euseb. H. Ecc. Lib. II. cap. 14.

‡ Euseb. Lib. VI. cap. 14.

|| Τῶν προαναγραφέντων τριῶν εἰς πάντας, — ἀποδέξατο μὲν (φασὶν Ἰωάννην) ἀλλήθως αὐτοῖς ἐπιμαρτυρήσαντι. Euseb. Lib. III. cap. 24. pag. 95.

oned, whether *they* were the real Authors of those *Epistles* which now bear *Gurdon*. their Names, especially of that which bears the Name of *Barnabas*. And there- S E R M fore the Church might have good Reason for receiving *Mark* and *Luke*, and XVI. not *Clemens* and *Barnabas*, into the Canon of the Holy Scriptures; and the Faith of a Christian may be well grounded which receives these Gospels for a Part of its Rule, without concerning itself about the Epistles of *Clemens* and *Barnabas*.

3dly, W E are now to see, whether the *Gospels* which are come down to our Times, are really the *Gospels* writ by them, or only *Apocryphal* Writings, with their Names to them. And the Reason for such a Suspicion may be grounded upon this, That if the *Hebrew Gospel* of St. *Matthew* could be altered to such a Degree, and so soon after its Publishing, that in the Time of *Eusebius* it was become doubtful, whether it was his *Gospel* or not; what Security can we have, who live at a much greater Distance from the Time when these *Gospels* were first Published, that our *Gospels* are not as much altered, as the *Hebrew Gospel* of St. *Matthew* was in the Time of *Eusebius*: when the Alterations were so many, as to make it pass with several for an *Apocryphal* Book, entitled, *The Gospel according to the Hebrews*. Our Answer is, That Books in the Hands of the *Gentile* Christians, could not be altered so easily, as those that were in the Hands of only one Nation, viz, the converted *Jews*, and those only the converted *Syrian Jews*; for only these made Use of the *Hebrew Gospel* of St. *Matthew*. Whereas those who read the Gospel in *Greek*, were dispersed all over the World; consequently, a Multitude of Copies in Places at the greatest Distance from one another: And therefore if any considerable Alterations had been made in one Place, they must have been taken Notice of by those of another Place, who had none of them in their Copies of the Gospel. Besides the Number of Copies in Parts very distant from each other, which has always been the Case of our *Greek* Copies of the Gospel; there have been from the Beginning a great Number of Translations from the *Greek*, into the several Languages that were commonly spoken in the several Countries which made Profession of the Christian Religion. If there had been any considerable Alterations made in our *Greek* Copies of the Gospels, they must have been discovered by some or other of the Old Versions; as the *Hebrew* Copy of St. *Matthew* was found to be greatly altered, by comparing it with the *Greek* Version; whereas the *Greek* Copies agree for the most Part with all the Versions that have been made from the *Greek*: And therefore we cannot doubt that the Gospels which we receive as *Canonical*, were the Gospels of *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke* and *John*. I shall have occasion to speak more particularly as to the Faithfulness of our Copies of the Gospels; in the mean Time,

I P R O C E E D to the Second general Head which was, That there is no good Evidence that any of the *Apocryphal* Gospels were writ by that Apostle, or those Apostles, whose Name they bear; and therefore when they give any Accounts different from the Received Gospels, that they are not to be regarded. That no good Evidence can be produced in Behalf of the *Apocryphal* Gospels, will appear, if I can prove, 1st, That they were not taken Notice of 'till many Years after that Apostle's Time, whose Writing they pretend to be. Or,

2dly, T H A T if they were quoted early by some Writers, they were not quoted as the Writings of an Apostle. The Author of *Nazarenus* has express'd a particular Fondness for the pretended Gospel of *Barnabas*, and the Reason of his Fondness seems to be its contradicting the Account our *Canonical* Gospels give of our SAVIOUR's Death and Resurrection. But 'tis certain, this Gospel escap'd the Searches of Inquisitive Men, such as *Eusebius* and *Jerom*, who made it their Business to inform themselves of every Thing relating to Ecclesiastical Antiquity; and was not discovered 'till above Four Hundred Years after it must have been writ, supposing St *Barnabas* to have been the Author of it. For the first mention that *Toland* could find to be made of this Gospel, was in the Decree of Pope *Gelasius*, in a Council held at *Rome* in the Year 493 * But I be-

* *Nazarenus*. pag. 6, 7.

Gurdon. lieve it will scarce be thought probable, that a Gospel writ by so celebrated a Person as St. *Barnabas*, could have lain hid for so long a Time, especially at a Time when we are told, that Christians were very inquisitive and desirous to learn any Particulars relating to the Words and Actions of our SAVIOUR. 'Twas this strong Desire that encouraged Deceivers to put out *fiſtitious* Accounts of our SAVIOUR's Words and Actions under the Name of some Apostles; and the same Desire would never have suffered a Gospel, writ by a *Companion* and *Fellow Labourer* with the Apostle, to have lain in Obscurity for so long a Time *. The Author of *Nazarenus* does not offer to assign a Reason, why this Gospel was not taken Notice of before the Time of *Gelasius*, or of *Damasus* at the highest; but contents himself with endeavouring to shew, that this Gospel *might* be as old as the Times of the Apostles, altho' it does not agree with the *Canonical* Gospels in this Particular concerning the Death and Resurrection of our SAVIOUR. And the Reason given for this is, Because this Gospel is not the *only old* one, that tells us that CHRIST was not *really* put to Death, and therefore that he did not "rise again; for that "the *Corinthians* and *Carpocratians* did believe that it was not JESUS, but "one of his Followers, very like him in Person, that was crucified in his "Stead; and yet *Cerintus* was Contemporary with *Peter*, *Paul*, and *John* †. Thus far *Nazarenus*. But this Writer was much deceived in making *Cerintus* to deny the Death and Resurrection of JESUS; for *Irenæus*, who lived near the Time of *Cerintus*, was certainly a better Judge of his Opinions, than *Epiphanius*, from whom *Toland* had this Account of the *Cerinthians*, as he lived at a much greater Distance from the Beginning of that Sect. But *Irenæus* tells us, *Cerintus's* Belief was, that before the Death of JESUS, CHRIST left him, and flew back to Heaven, but that JESUS suffered Death and rose again. *In fine autem revolaſſe Chriſtum de Jeſu, & Jeſum paſſum eſſe & reſurrexiſſe* ‡. We see then this Account to be very different from that of the Gospel of St. *Barnabas*, but agreeing with *our* Gospels in the Fact of the Death and Resurrection; and that this particular Circumstance of some other Body being crucified, and not our SAVIOUR, was a Novel Invention, not heard of in the Times nearest to our SAVIOUR, either by the Orthodox or Hereticks, and therefore a good Proof that this Gospel was writ since the Time of *Barnabas*. But

2dly, As to those Apocryphal Gospels which were taken notice of, and cited by the Early Writers; there is no Evidence that they were writ by those Apostles, whose Name they bear; because when they quote any Passage out of them, they either speak of them as Gospels forged by Hereticks; or else as of Books whose real Authors were unknown, altho' the Title of an Apostle was prefixed to them. I do not deny that some Early Writers have quoted the Epistle of *Barnabas*, the Pastor of *Hermas*, and some others, as the genuine Writings of those Authors; but as to any Gospels, there were none but our Four Gospels, which had an undoubted Authority; it not being questioned, whether these Gospels were Writ by those Persons whose Names they bear, as we have already seen; whereas every one of the *other* Gospels were rejected by some or other of the *Hereticks*, and all of them by the *Catholicks*, as Spurious Pieces. Thus *Origen* tells us in his First *Homily* on St. *Luke's* Gospel, That the "Church has Four Gospels, but Heretical Christians many more;" among which are reckon'd by him the Gospel according to *Thomas*, the Gospel by St. *Matthias*: To these || *Eusebius* adds that of St. *Peter* and St. *Andrew*. The Gospel intitled St. *Peter's* Gospel is also mentioned by *Origen*, but rejected by him as the † Work of some other Author. If some weak *Catholicks* did for some Time take these for Gospels written by Apostles, this is no more than what commonly happens in all Forgeries, which will have a Currency, till

* *Nazarenus*. pag. 17.|| *Ecclesi. Hist. lib. 3. cap. 25.*† *Nazaren. p. 17.*‡ *Tom. xi. Comment. in Matth.*‡ *Irenæus, p. 105.*

they are carefully look'd into, especially in such Times as were those of the First Ages of Christianity, when the Persecutions Christians met with from their Enemies, did not give them Leisure or Opportunity for enquiring what Evidence there was to support them; and therefore the Reception given them by some Christians at first can be no Proof of their Authority, nor any Reason why they might not afterwards reject them. They might for some Time receive such Gospels, as the Writings of *Apostles*, and afterwards find themselves mistaken, without giving us any Reason for suspecting the Authority of our Four Gospels; because *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke* and *John* were from the Beginning universally allowed to be the Authors of them. And thus I have shewn that the Canonical Gospels received by us were the Gospels of *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke* and *John*, that both the Gospels of *Mark* and *Luke* were generally thought to have received the Approbation of an Apostle, and therefore we may depend upon a true Account of the Christian Religion in these Gospels. That no other Gospels are to be regarded, when they differ from these, whatever pompous Titles may be at the Head of them; because no good Evidence, that any of them were the Work of an Apostle. Therefore nothing more can be necessary for settling a Man's Faith in the Christian Religion, but to shew that notwithstanding the *Originals* of the Evangelists are lost, (from which only we could hope for an exact Copy of these Gospels) and the *Copies* that have been transcribed from them, do differ in many Particulars; yet the *Variations* either do not affect any Thing necessary to be believed or practised, or if they do, the true Reading is still preserved in some Copy or other.

'Tis evident to any one that has consulted the Various Readings collected by Dr. *Mills*, that a great Part of them are mere Trifles, that do not affect the Sense of the Writer of the Gospels, which soever Reading we take. That many of those, which are supposed to have been alter'd by Design, had only a Relation to Misquotations of the *Old Testament*, or to reconciling one Evangelist with another, when they thought them to differ in some Circumstance of a Fact; or to leaving out some Passages which they thought might be, or they found actually were, perverted and misunderstood: Or substituting others less liable to Exception in the Room of them: Or else the Alteration might affect some necessary Doctrine of a Christian's Faith. To some one or other of these Heads may be reduced most of the Alterations, that are supposed to have been designedly made in our Gospels. An Instance of the first Sort is supposed to be found in *Matth* xiii. 35. *That it might be fulfilled by the Prophet, I will open my Mouth in Parables, &c.* * *Porphry* read it in the Copy he used, the Prophet *Isaiab*, and made it an Objection against the Evangelist. And St. *Jerom* owns he found in some Copies the Prophet *Isaiab*, but that *Isaiab* was left out of the greatest Part of the Copies in his Time, because no such Quotation was to be found in *Isaiab*; for which Reason he says, *Arbitror postea sublatum esse a prudentibus viris* †. An Instance of altering to reconcile one Evangelist with another is given in the Time of our SAVIOUR'S Crucifixion, which St. *Mark* says was the *Third Hour*, and St. *John* about the *Sixth*, and yet 'tis observed, that some Copies of St. *John* had the *Third Hour*, as well as some Copies of St. *Mark* had the *Sixth Hour*, just as the Transcriber was inclined either to bring St. *John* to St. *Mark*, or St. *Mark* to St. *John*. Of Omissions, and of substituting one Word for another, the Instances are, *Luke* xix. 41. and *John* vii. 8. The first is CHRIST'S Weeping over *Jerusalem*; this was thought a Passion unbecoming our SAVIOUR, and therefore, as *Epiphanius* tells us, was left out of those Copies which were then thought most correct ‡. In the other Place of *John* vii. 8. 'tis thought that one Word is substituted in the Place of another: Our SAVIOUR had told his Disciples, that He would have them go to the Feast of the *Passover*, but as to *Himself* that He designed

* Hieron. Comment. super Matth. cap. xii.

† See the Author of the Commentary on the 77th Psalm. Breviarium Hieron.

‡ Ἀλλὰ καὶ Ἐκλαυσεν αὐτὸς ἐν τῇ κατὰ Λουκᾶν Ἐυαγγελίῳ ἐν τοῖς ἀδιερθέτοις ἀντιγράφοις. — Ὁρθόδοξοι δὲ ἀφείλοντο τὸ ῥητόν, φοβηθέντες καὶ μὴ νοήσαντες αὐτὸ τὸ τίλθαι τὸ ἐχρυσότατον. Epiphanius in Ancorato. cap. 31.

Gurdon, not to go thither; and yet it appears by the Sequel of the History, that He SERM. actually did go. St. *Jerom* observes, that *Porphyry* had mark'd this Passage as XVI. an Argument of our SAVIOUR's Inconstancy, and therefore that the $\epsilon\kappa$ was changed into $\epsilon\pi\alpha$ to avoid the Force of this Objection.

OUR Answer to all this is, That no Body ever denied there have been such weak Persons among Christians, as might alter their Copies of the Gospels in such Places, as they found themselves unable to defend against the Objections the Heathens made to them. But then we say, that there is no Probability that such Alterations should so far obtain, as to throw out the true Reading in all the Copies of the World. That Copies of the Gospels in the Original were dispers'd into so many Hands, besides the many *Versions* of those Gospels, that neither weak Christians, nor St. *Jerom's* prudent Men, would have it in their Power to carry their Alterations into all the Copies in all the different and distant Parts of the World. And we find it to be true in Fact, that in these Places, which are suppos'd to have been altered by Design, the genuine Reading is preserved at this Day in some Copy or other. And tho' St. *Jerom* says, in his Time *Isaiab* was left out of most Copies in *Matth. xiii. 35.* yet *Kuster* in his Edition of *Mills's New Testament* tells us of one Copy in the *French King's Library* that has it at this Day, viz. the 6th *Parisian*; as to the other Instances of designed Alterations, we find that which is supposed to be the true Reading, in more Copies than are those that want it; but if it had been otherwise, as no Part of a Christian's Faith or Practice would have been affected by not having the true Reading of the *Evangelist* in any of these Instances.

I WILL proceed to consider the Instances of designed Alterations in a Point of Faith, as concerning the Divinity of the SON; 'tis thought, that the Dispute between the *Orthodox* and *Arians* was carried on with so much Warmth, that the *Arians* altered their Copies in such Places where CHRIST was called GOD, or equalled to the FATHER, as *1 Tim. iii. 16.* GOD manifested in the Flesh, this some say, was changed into, which was manifested in the Flesh; to avoid the Force of the Word GOD. 'Tis certain both Readings were supported by a great Number of Copies; which shews the Industry of one of the Parties, to support its Opinion. And the famous Text in *1 John v. 7.* of the Three that bear Witness in Heaven, is supposed to have been put into this *Epistle* to serve Purposes.

THO' these Instances are not in the Gospels, but the Epistles, yet as the Gospels might have been as easily altered as any of the Epistles at that Time, I think myself obliged to shew, that a Christian has less Reason to fear finding the true Reading in these Instances of designed Alterations, than in the former Ones; because the Alterations before mention'd were made some of them much earlier, when there were fewer Copies of the Gospels, than there were of these Epistles in the Time of the *Arian* Controversy. For when *Arius* first set up his Doctrine, Christianity was the Established Religion, and dispersed over all Parts of the *Roman Empire*, and consequently Copies of the *New Testament* very much multiplied; and it was the Interest of either Side to watch one another, that neither should corrupt the Witnesses. And therefore whatever Inclination there might be in the *Orthodox* or *Arian* to alter the Scriptures, it would not be in their Power, at least in all such Places as related to this Controversy. Consequently every Christian may have enough to build his Faith upon in the *New Testament*, such as 'tis brought down to our Times. If sometimes there be a Difficulty of determining among many, which is the true Reading, and we know not whether some necessary Doctrine of the Religion be not treated of in the Place, we need not be solicitous; for if it be such, we shall find it in other Places, where there is no Difficulty in settling the Text; because those which are undoubtedly the necessary Doctrines of the Christian Religion, are so often repeated in the *New Testament*, such as we have it, and so closely woven into the very Body of it, that there would be no removing any one of them out of every Place of the

New

New Testament, without substituting another Sett of Gospels and Epistles in *Gurdon*. the Room of the present ones, as will be evident to every one that makes the Experiment on any one Article of that which is call'd, the *Apostles Creed*: But we have already shewn it to be impossible that our Gospels should be, as to the main Part of them, any other than those which were writ by *Matthew*, *Mark*, *Luke* and *John*; and the same Reason will hold as to these Epistles, which were more universally spread, more Copies and Translations of them in the Time of *Arius*, than there were of the Gospels, when some of the Alterations before mentioned were made.

THUS I have shewn that there is no Ground for suspecting, that the Christian Religion was from the Beginning of it a *cunningly devised Fable*, because those who first Preached it, must have been sincere Persons, and also that it cannot have been so altered since *their* Time, as to become one in *ours*; because whatever Alterations may have been made in some Copies by Transcribers, they could not affect our Christian Faith, or hinder us from receiving the Gospel, such as it was Preached by the Apostles, in all material Points. And therefore whatever the *Infidel* may think of the Gospel, I doubt not, it will appear to all *impartial* Enquirers to be no less than a Message from Heaven made known to us, as *St. Peter* expresses it, in the Words of my *Text*, *by the Power and Coming of our Lord JESUS CHRIST*, as of a Person appointed by God to declare his Will to Mankind.

AND now I hope to have fully shewn the dangerous State of Infidelity; or that all the Difficulties the Unbeliever pretends to raise against Religious Principles, cannot secure him against the Apprehensions of Punishment in a future State; we have therefore nothing more to do, but to beg of God, That He would be so Good as to incline the Heart of the Unbeliever to believe in Him and his Son JESUS CHRIST.

“ O merciful God, who hast made all Men, and hatest Nothing that
 “ Thou hast made, nor wouldest the Death of a Sinner, but rather that
 “ he should be converted and live, have Mercy upon all *Jews*, *Turks*,
 “ *Infidels* and *Hereticks*; and take from them all Ignorance, Hardness
 “ of Heart, and Contempt of Thy Word; and so fetch them Home,
 “ blessed LORD, to Thy Flock, that they may be saved among the
 “ Remnant of the true *Israelites*, and be made one Fold under One
 “ Shepherd, JESUS CHRIST our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with
 “ Thee, and the Holy SPIRIT, One God, World without End.
 “ Amen.

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THE
DEMONSTRATION
OF
TRUE RELIGION,

In a Chain of Consequences from certain and undeniable Principles ;

WHEREIN

The Necessity and Certainty of Natural and Reveal'd RELIGION,
with the Nature and Reason of both, are prov'd and Explain'd:

And in particular,

The Authority of the Christian Revelation is establish'd, not only from the
Natures, and Reasons of things, but also from the Relation it bears to the
Scriptures of the *Old Testament*.

In SIXTEEN
SERMONS,

Preach'd at BOW-CHURCH,

In the Years 1724, and 1725;

FOR THE

LECTURE

Founded by the HONOURABLE

ROBERT BOYLE, Esq;

By THOMAS BURNETT, D. D.

Rector of *Westkington* in *Wiltshire*, and Prebendary of the Cathedral Church
of *SARUM*.

TO
The RIGHT HONOURABLE
RICHARD, *Earl of* BURLINGTON;

The Right Reverend Fathers in GOD,
EDMUND, *Lord Bishop of* LONDON,
SAMUEL, *Lord Bishop of* ROCHESTER,
AND
WHITE, *Lord Bishop of* PETERBOROUGH,

T R U S T E E S

Appointed by
The Most Reverend Father in God, **THOMAS,**
late Lord Archbishop of *Canterbury*, the last
surviving TRUSTEE Named by

THE HONOURABLE
ROBERT BOYLE, Esq;

THESE
S E R M O N S

Are most humbly Dedicated.

T H E P R E F A C E.

AS Religion is of the highest Importance to Mankind, as being that, without which we can have no true Comfort, even in this World, as well as no Assurance of a better; it closely concerns us all, as we naturally desire Happiness, not only seriously to enquire into it, to see upon what foot it stands, but also to form such a rational Notion of it, as may be a just Ground of Hope and Comfort, and such as we may rest upon with Confidence.

The many different, and inconsistent Schemes, that some Persons have drawn of it, have given occasion to weak and unthinking People to suspect, that the whole is a meer human Invention, set up as an Engine, by cunning Men, to carry on their private Ends.

And indeed I am apt to think, that the greatest Part of our Errors are so, especially those, that are maintain'd with the greatest Heat.

Truth ordinarily lies plain enough to be seen by every sincere Enquirer after it; and when we are drawn away from it, there is generally some private carnal End at the Bottom, that governs us, and gives our Minds a wrong Bias.

The only way to prevent or correct this, is, to form our Ideas from the Natures of things: This is a certain foundation to build upon: And if Religion shall appear to be founded in Nature, as this will be a Demonstration of its Truth and Certainty; so the Notions that are clearly deduced from hence, are such as we may depend upon.

This is the Method I have taken in the following Treatise, and I have done it impartially. I had no Scheme that I desir'd to establish, no Hypothesis to support, but I both began, and pursued my Meditations with a desire only of Truth.

And as I have all along followed Nature, so the Consequences I have drawn from it are purely Natural, such as came of themselves, and have propagated one another, without any foresight or design of mine.

I began my Inquiry at the Existence of God, which may be demonstrated several Ways:

The usual Method of Divines is, to reason from his Works to his Being, and from the visible Characters of Goodness and Wisdom in the World to infer a wise Author of it: And the Argument is good and strong.

But I have chosen to proceed in the metaphysical Way, which, the Notion of God consider'd as a self-existent Being, naturally led me into: And having prov'd the Necessity of such a Being, and the Perfection that must necessarily be ascrib'd to him, I thence form'd my Notion of his Works.

The Existence of God I have consider'd, as briefly as I could, not only, as it is a Subject abundantly confirm'd by others, from whose learned Labours every Difficulty will find a proper Resolution, but also as it is what our modern Infidels pretend to agree with us in. But upon the Nature and Perfections of God I have been more large and particular, as being that upon which my whole after Reasoning is built.

I have endeavour'd to establish a right Apprehension of every Attribute of the divine Nature, and from thence I have drawn a Scheme of the Creation and Government of the World:

And as the Notions I have form'd of God, and his Operations are such, as are founded in Nature, they may be call'd The Creed of Nature.

And as I have from hence shewn, the practical Obligations that Mankind are indispensably engag'd in the Nature of things to live by, these I call The Laws of Nature.

These I have largely explain'd, and distinguish'd, and shewn the different Nature and Reason of them, according as Mankind are differently consider'd, either in a pure or corrupted State.

From these two different States, which I have particularly consider'd, I have likewise given the Reader a different View of the Government of the World, and shewn the Necessity of various Revelations in both, and what those Revelations must be: And from hence, I hope, I have sufficiently establish'd not only the Certainty of the Christian Revelation, but also the general Nature of it.

As I was willing to bring my Argument as near to Demonstration, as the Nature of the thing would bear, I have proceeded all along in a Chain of Consequences from (I think) certain and undeniable Principles.

As the Chain is long, and the Use I make of the several Parts of it, sometimes at a Distance, it frequently requires a long Stretch of Thought and Observation before the Reader will come in sight of it: And this I'm sensible will make it heavy and tedious to many.

This is a way of Reasoning, that is agreeable to few. Few are capable of carrying on a Thread thro' a long Succession of Consequences, and especially where they do not immediately see the Use of them.

And few can relish an Argument that is metaphysical, where nothing is to be look'd for but bare Truth:

This is what is seldom sought after: Most People are fond of Words, and Phrases, and read only for what they call Pretty things: But there is nothing of that kind to be expected here. These Treatises are calculated for another Taste: I aim at Truth only, and as I thought it improper to crowd up the Way to it by any needless Incumbrances, or impertinent Avocations; so I have purposely avoided every thing but what is necessary to my Design; and have not scrupled very often, even to repeat what I had said, where I thought it might be useful for the better Apprehension of my Meaning, or my Argument.

My Concern is only to be understood, and for that Purpose I affect to be, as plain as possible, that I may convey those Speculations in a proper Light to others, that have afforded great Satisfaction to myself. And this I desire only, as they appear to be Truths, and those of the highest Importance.

'Tis a sufficient Evidence to me, that they are Truths, not only as they are (when considered separately) the necessary Consequences, (as I said before) from certain and undeniable Principles; but also, as they do, (when consider'd together,) make a rational and consistent Scheme, the Parts of which are naturally connected to, and mutually illustrate, and support one another.

And if they are Truths, they are such as cannot but be of the highest Importance, as being the Foundation of all true Religion, and the Rules by which we are to form our Notions of it, and judge of all Pretences to it.

I have already met with one Objection, which is hardly worth observing, viz. That many things here are new, whereas Truth must be old.

But how novel soever any thing appears to us, the Truth of it is not to be judg'd by that, but by the Nature of things: And if what I have said be agreeable to the Nature of things, it is a Truth, and was always so, how long soever it has lain hid from us, and it ought to be no Objection, that it was thought of no sooner.

But whatever the Reader shall find of that Nature here, I can assure him it was not sought for, as such, out of Affectation of Novelty, nor can it be a just Offence to any one, when he will find every thing here of what kind soever, made subservient to the Honour of God, and the Support, and Confirmation of True Religion.

I ought to beg Pardon for taking Notice of such poor low Stuff: But as the Objection has been made, and probably will be made by many more of those who dare not think but under Licence from Authority, I conceiv'd it proper to say something to it, being willing to remove every, even the smallest Prejudice, out of my Way, where so great a Concern as the Demonstration of True Religion is in View.

T H E
D E M O N S T R A T I O N
O F
T R U E R E L I G I O N.

MY design in the following Sheets is to demonstrate, that there is such *Burnett.*
a thing, as true Religion, and what that Religion is.

IN order to this, it will be necessary to inquire, what Principles we have to build upon: For in all Disputes there must be something granted, before any certainty can be attain'd by Argument.

I KNOW it has been taught by the celebrated *Cartesius*, as the first Principle of true Philosophy, and the only true method of Science, to doubt of every thing, and to take nothing for granted but what is prov'd;

BUT this can be a Rule in such things only, as are really capable of Doubt and Proof; whereas there are many Propositions so evident in themselves, as to admit of neither.

I CONCEIVE it impossible for any Man to doubt of his own Existence, or if we could doubt of it, it would be impossible ever to resolve that Doubt; unless we could be able to find out something to prove it by, that we could be more certain of, than we are of our own Being.

To prove that I am, because I think, is to prove that I am, by supposing that I am, and taking it for granted, that I think, which according to this Rule I ought to doubt of.

AND certainly he, that can doubt of his own Being, has the very same reason to doubt of his Thinking, and 'twill not be possible to prove, that he thinks, by any thing, that he will not have the same reason still to doubt of.

AND therefore, unless there be allow'd from self-evident Propositions that cannot be doubted of, this method of philosophizing will be so far from a just method of Science, that 'tis only a Foundation for everlasting Scepticism, without any possibility of knowing any thing.

SOMETHING therefore must be granted in all Disputes; and all that I shall desire to be granted in this, is, only such things, as are, either self-evident, and so plain, that they cannot be doubted or prov'd; or else such, as tho' they may in their own nature be doubted, are yet so universally known and allow'd, that they need not be prov'd.

As *First*, I shall take for granted all the explications of the Terms and Definitions here made use of, as being such as are universally agreed on; as likewise all those things, that are necessarily and obviously implied in the very notion of those Terms and Definitions.

Secondly, I SHALL take for granted all those Propositions, the truth of which depends upon the evidence of Sense, or universal Experience; or else are plain to every understanding, that apprehends the terms of the Propositions; and these things being allow'd, I shall upon this Basis endeavour to build the whole Fabrick of true Religion.

AND this I will do in the plainest, and most simple manner possible, purposely avoiding all dress and ornament; which, tho' they may please, and entertain the Reader, they seldom fail to darken the reasoning, and draw off his attention from the force of the Argument.

Burnett. AND as I purpose to proceed in the way of Demonstration, I shall make use of no arguments in the course of my reasoning, but such as are naturally connected with, and mutually dependent upon one another, carried on in a regular chain of Consequences from certain, and undeniable Principles, till I come to the point I aim at.

IN order to this end, it will be necessary in the first place to explain, what is to be meant by Religion.

IN the explication of this, we must observe, that if it be consider'd in general, it is not a simple thing, and therefore cannot be represented under a simple notion.

BUT it is a System, or chain of Principles, which being receiv'd, as true, are the reasons, or motives obliging us to the performance, or non-performance of such and such Actions.

AND therefore in treating upon true Religion, the proper method would be to demonstrate the truth of those several Principles, with the obligations that result from them.

BUT for as much as they all depend upon one great and fundamental Article, which is,

THAT there is a self-existent, absolutely perfect Being, on whom all Creatures have an entire dependence, as he is the Creator, and Governour of the World, which Being we call God;

HERE it will be necessary to begin our work, by endeavouring to evince the truth of this Article, by proving the existence of such a Being; and then to shew you what religious obligations will naturally arise from it.

As for the existence of a self-existent, absolutely perfect Being, who made and governs the World, considering this is a point that has been so often, and so abundantly demonstrated by several learned Persons, it may seem impertinent to say any thing on a subject so beaten, and exhausted: But my design, and method require me to consider it, that my thread may be regular, and entire: However I shall be as short upon it, as I can, and shall only draw out such a chain of reasonings, as are sufficient for a general notion of it, and for a foundation to build my after design upon.

AND that I may do this with the greater perspicuity and exactness, I will proceed in the following method.

First, I WILL demonstrate, that there cannot but be some self-existent Being.

Secondly, THAT this self-existent Being cannot but be absolutely perfect.

Thirdly, THAT this absolutely perfect Being was the Creator of the World.

Fourthly, THAT this absolutely perfect Creator must be the Governor of the World.

P R O P. I.

As to the first of these, that there cannot but be some self-existent Being; it is necessary to observe, that by a self-existent Being, I do not mean a Being that exists of it self, as the cause and maker of it self. For this is a manifest impossibility, as supposing his being, and not being, at the same time: He must be, as the cause producing; and not be, as the effect to be produced; and so must necessarily be, before he was, which is an evident, and undeniable contradiction.

BUT by a self-existent Being, I mean, a Being without a cause, or beginning; or a Being, who has not his existence from another, but from himself, or his own Nature; or a Being, that exists, because it is his nature to exist.

THESE are all but different expressions for the same thing; and as they do imply each other, so they may be indifferently us'd one for the other.

FOR to exist without a cause, is to exist without beginning, and to exist without cause, or beginning, is to exist of his own nature, or because it is his nature to exist.

Now,

Now, that there is such a Being, is our next business to prove, which *Burnett*. how much soever it may pose our understandings to conceive, how 'tis possible, yet we are as certain it cannot but be so, as we are sure that any thing does exist:

BECAUSE without such a Being, it would have been impossible for any thing to be.

FOR if there was not some Being without beginning, there was a time, when there was no Being; and if so, it must have been impossible for any thing ever to have come into being, unless something be suppos'd to make itself, which is already shewn to be impossible.

AND therefore the Atheist's own argument is in this Sense most undoubtedly true, that *out of nothing, nothing can proceed*; that is, where there is neither Patient to be acted on, nor Agent to act, there must be an everlasting nothing.

So that, let the Atheist take what Hypothesis he pleases, he must necessarily allow the truth of this proposition, that there cannot but be some self-existent Being. And if so, from hence it will follow, that there cannot but be some independent, eternal, necessary, everlasting, immutable, omnipresent Being.

FOR to exist without a cause, supposes in the very notion of it independency, and to exist without beginning, is to exist from all Eternity, and to exist naturally and independently, is to exist necessarily, or to exist, because 'tis impossible for it not to exist: For that a thing be possible, it must be the object of some Power, and therefore if we can conceive it possible for a Being, that exists of his own nature independently, not to exist; we must at the same time conceive some power that can make it not exist: And if there be any such Power conceivable, it must be either something in its own nature, or something without: But as it is a contradiction in terms, that a Being, whose very nature it is to be, should have a nature not to be; so, it is on the other hand, no less a contradiction to suppose a Being that exists independently, subject to any other Power, or Being, whether it shall exist, or not.

A self-existent therefore is a necessary Being, and whatever exists necessarily, must exist everlastingly, and immutably.

FOR as it is self-evident, that that, which cannot but be, and whose non-existence is impossible, cannot have an end; so 'tis as evident, that whatever a necessary Being is, he is necessarily, and therefore cannot be otherwise, than he is, in any respect whatsoever; and by consequence as he always actually was, whatever he is, or can be from all Eternity past; so he will continue to all Eternity to come, without any possibility of being more or less, better or worse, or in any respect otherwise than he is, and by consequence without succession or improvement, interruption or decay.

AND whatsoever is all this, must be omnipresent. For whatsoever is self-existent, as it is its nature to be, without respect to place; so it will follow, that it is equally its nature to be in one place, as well as another; and as its nature is the ground, and reason of its Being, there is by consequence the same reason for its being every where, as any where: And as a self-existent necessary Being cannot but be, so it cannot but be, whatever it is its nature to be, and therefore it cannot but be in one place, as well as another; and if it might be absent from one place, it might by the same reason, be absent from another; and by consequence would not be necessarily in any place;

A self-existent Being therefore, must be omnipresent.

P R O P. II.

Now that this self-existent, independent, eternal, necessary, everlasting, immutable, omnipresent Being is absolutely perfect, is our next business to prove.

THE word Perfection, in the metaphysical sense of it, signifies no more, than Being; but in the common use of it, it denotes some determinate degree of

Burnet. of Being, according to the different natures of things, consider'd simply in themselves, or in the relation they bear to one another. For the same thing may be said to be perfect in one respect, and imperfect in another at the same time.

A THING may be said to be perfect in its kind, which wants nothing to make it intire, and compleat, according to its nature; and yet it may be said to be imperfect in comparison of something else, as wanting some degree of Being, which that other has. Thus for instance:

A PLANT is said to be more perfect than a mere substance, such as earth, or sand, because 'tis a substance indued with a vegetative life, or a power of growth; and yet it is imperfect, in comparison of a Beast, which is a substance indued with an animal Life and Sense: And tho' a Beast is in this respect more perfect, than a Plant, yet it is still imperfect in comparison of a Man, who is indued with Life, Sense, and Reason:

So that things are said to be more or less perfect, according as they have a more or less excellent degree of Being:

AND therefore when we say that a Being is absolutely perfect, we must mean, that he has all possible degrees of Being, so as not to be capable of any addition, whereby he may become more excellent than he is.

Now that whatsoever is self-existent is thus perfect, is abundantly evident from various considerations, but I shall chuse to deduce it only from what I have already prov'd.

AND therefore first, as I have shewn (p. 406, 407.) that a self-existent Being exists by his nature, necessarily, and independently, and immutably, and therefore is all, that his nature is capable of being, without any possibility of limitation or addition, of being more or less, better or worse than he is, and therefore must be all that it is possible for it to be.

So we have likewise shewn (p. 406.) that nothing could have come into Being, without allowing something self-existent; and if this be true,

As it will hence follow on the one hand, that nothing does exist but what is self-existent, or had its Being originally from something self-existent, and by consequence whatever perfection any Being has, a self-existent Being must have, because their whole Being is deriv'd from him:

So it will likewise follow on the other hand, that what a self-existent Being has not, cannot come into Being, and therefore is impossible to be.

AND from hence it appears that a self-existent Being, must have all possible degrees of Being, which is what we mean, when we say he is absolutely perfect:

AND a Being thus perfect, eternal, necessary, immutable, omnipresent without beginning or ending, without succession or improvement, interruption or decay, I call an infinite Being.

THUS have I demonstrated the absolute Perfection of God in general: But because we cannot, by reason of the weakness of our finite capacities, conceive this Perfection, but under distinct, and inadequate Ideas, which we call particular Attributes, and Perfections; here it would be proper to inquire particularly, what those Attributes, and Perfections are, under which the divine Nature is conceived, and how far they ought to be ascribed to him:

BUT, as this would give too great an interruption to the thread of my reasoning, and render it more dark and intricate, I shall beg leave to post-pone it a while, till I have dispatched the two remaining Propositions concerning the Creation, and Government of the World; it being at present sufficient for my purpose, that I have demonstrated that absolute Perfection in general, in which all particulars are comprehended.

BUT before I proceed, it will be proper to draw some few inferences from what I have said.

INFERENCE

I N F E R E N C E I.

First then, SINCE there is, as has been proved, a self-existent Being, or a Being, whose Nature it is to exist; (p. 406.) as it will hence follow on the one hand, that whatever he is, he is by his Nature, and it is his very Essence so to be; and by consequence, whatever we conceive to be in God, is his very Essence, really, and truly God:

So on the other hand, since we have shewn his Nature to be independent, eternal, necessary, everlasting, immutable and omnipresent, (p. 407.) it will likewise follow, that whatever he is, he is every where, independently, eternally, necessarily, everlastingly, and immutably.

I N F E R E N C E II.

Secondly, SINCE whatsoever is self-existent is absolutely perfect; (p. 408.) then, since every thing we conceive to be in God, is his very Essence, and therefore self-existent, it will follow, that every Perfection, we conceive to be in God, must be absolutely perfect, because self-existent:

AND by consequence, when we speak of God, as having many different Perfections belonging to his Nature, we must not be supposed to mean,

EITHER that these Perfections are common accidents, really distinct from the Divine Essence; because there is nothing in God, but what is his Essence, really and truly God:

OR that they are really distinct from each other. For then there must be as many Gods, as there are different Perfections, every Perfection having the Essence of God, and by consequence must be self-existent, and absolutely perfect.

AND if these Perfections be neither distinct from the Divine Nature, nor one another, it will follow,

I N F E R E N C E III.

Thirdly, THAT the Nature of God is simple, and indivisible: So that tho' the Divine Nature be conceiv'd sometimes under one notion, sometimes under another; yet it is but one entire Perfection, one simple and indivisible principle of Action, consider'd under different operations, and exercis'd upon different objects, so as to form in us those different notions of him; whilst there is no real difference, or distinction in him, but in our apprehensions only.

I N F E R E N C E IV.

Fourthly, SINCE whatsoever is self-existent is absolutely perfect, and whatsoever is in God, is God; from hence it will follow, that there can be but one God.

FOR if there were more than one, they must be different, the one from the other, and that accidentally, or essentially: But they cannot differ accidentally, because a self-existent Being can have no accidents; and if they differ essentially, one must have some degree of Being, which the other has not; whereas they are both suppos'd to have all degrees of Being, as they are suppos'd to be absolutely perfect: And by consequence there can be no more self-existent, absolutely perfect Beings than one.

P R O P. III.

Now that this one self-existent, absolutely perfect Being was the Creator of the World, is the next Proposition to be prov'd.

Burnett. THIS, I think, will not need any great matter of argument, if what I have said be true.

I HAVE already prov'd, that nothing could have come into Being without something self-existent; and therefore either the World was self-existent, or it had its Being from some other, that is self-existent.

ALL therefore that we have to inquire after is, whether the World be self-existent, or not.

AND for the resolution of this question, I will take it for granted, that all that is in the World is, either Matter or not Matter: What is not Matter, we call Spirit.

IF then it can be prov'd, that there is nothing, either material, or spiritual in that System of Beings, which we call the World, that is self-existent; it will compleatly prove the question in dispute, namely, that the World cannot be self-existent, and by consequence was made.

NOW this I will demonstrate by such arguments only, as are already prov'd.

First, I WILL begin with the material part of the World, and it will not be difficult to prove, that this cannot be self-existent.

FOR since we have already shewn, (p. 407.) that whatever is self-existent is necessary, and immutable, and cannot be in any respect otherwise than it is:

SINCE we have likewise shewn, (p. 409.) that whatever is self-existent is simple, and indivisible without any possible parts, or properties really distinct from its Essence, or from each other:

AND since we have further shewn, (p. 407.) that whatever is self-existent, is omnipresent, and therefore incapable of limitation, or circumscription; these are arguments abundantly sufficient to demonstrate, that Matter cannot be self-existent, because these are all Perfections incompatible to Matter.

FOR 'tis Evident to Sense, that there is nothing material, but what is in its own nature mutable, and capable of being otherwise, than it is in many respects:

IT is evident to Sense, that there is nothing material, that can be conceiv'd without parts, and properties in their own nature divisible and distinct:

AND 'tis equally evident, that if all Matter be compos'd of distinct and divisible parts, all Matter must be limited, and circumscrib'd; the several parts are mutual bounds and limitations to each other; and as one part cannot be where another is, all Matter cannot be omnipresent, which it must necessarily be, if self-existent*.

AND if all this be not sufficient, since we have further shewn, (p. 408.) that whatever is self-existent is absolutely perfect; as no one can pretend to know any Matter that is, and 'tis self-evident, that all Matter is not absolutely perfect; it is equally evident, that Matter cannot be self-existent, and therefore was made by some other Being, that is self-existent.

I N F E R E N C E. V.

AND if so, from hence we must infer, that whatsoever is self-existent is immaterial.

AND this brings me to inquire in the next place,

Secondly, WHETHER there be any thing immaterial in that System of Beings, which we call the World, (without supposing a God) that can be self-existent.

IN answer to which we must inquire, what immaterial Beings are conceiv'd to be in the World, and whether self-existence can belong to all or any of them.

* There are several other and better arguments against the omnipresence of Matter, which prove it more directly, as they demonstrate a vacuum, or some space without matter; such as are taken from the Gravitation of Bodies according to their solid content of Matter; the motion of Comets, and the vibration of pendulums. But I was willing to argue from what I had before proved, that I might preserve the several parts of my argument in due connexion to each other, and therefore thought it more proper to refer the reader to those other considerations; if there should be any one, who is not satisfied about it, and thinks it necessary to inquire further. Dr. Clarke's Notes on Rohault's Physics may be consulted on this head, ch. 8. p. 25.

NOW of this sort of Beings Mankind have generally conceiv'd the rational *Burnett*. Souls of Men to be: Whether they be so, or not, does not belong to this argument, and whether there be any other, we do not know by bare Reason.

THE Scriptures indeed give us an account of a higher order of spiritual Beings; but the Scriptures must not be of any authority in this place, where we are disputing that, upon which their authority depends.

BESIDES we need not concern ourselves about those immaterial Beings, we are there inform'd of; because at the same time, that we are there told of their Being, they are manifestly represented, as dependent Creatures.

AND by consequence, we cannot doubt, whether those spiritual Beings, the Scripture speaks of, be self-existent, for whose Creation we have the same authority, as we have for their Existence.

ALL the spiritual Beings therefore that we know, whose Self-existence can possibly be pretended, are the human Souls:

WHETHER they be self-existent, or not, I believe never was, and probably never will be a dispute: But as I ought to mention it for method sake, so 'tis clear to demonstration that they are not so, from what we have already said.

FOR if every one has, as is universally suppos'd, and in the very question is implied, a distinct Soul; and if every one's Soul be self-existent; then since it does already appear, that whatsoever is self-existent is absolutely perfect, it will follow,

First, THAT there are many self-existent Beings, as there are human Souls; whereas we have already shewn, (*p.* 409.) there can be but one.

Secondly, THAT every one's Soul is absolutely perfect, which is contrary to every one's experience, and therefore there can be no pretence of self-existence here.

AND if so, then since neither the material, nor the immaterial part of what we call the World, and which is all that can be meant by it, is self-existent; it will follow, that the World was made by some other cause, which is self-existent, which was to be demonstrated.

P R O P. IV.

WE come now to the last Proposition, namely,

Fourthly, THAT this self-existent absolutely perfect Creator is the Governor of the World.

AND for the clear proof of this we may observe, that we have already shewn, (*p.* 407.) that whatever is self-existent is omnipresent, and we shall hereafter shew, that whatever is absolutely perfect, must be absolutely powerful, wise, and good; and if so,

THEN since it does already appear, (*p.* 409.) that whatever is in God, is God, and by consequence, whatever he is, he is every where; it will from hence follow,

THAT, as God is present with all things, so he must be present in the Perfection of Power, Wisdom and Goodness, and by consequence must govern all things:

FOR by Power I mean an ability to act; and by Goodness, an inclination, or disposition to do good; and by Wisdom, a faculty of understanding, that has relation to means, and ends.

AND as it is evidently the Perfection of every faculty to be exercis'd upon its proper objects; and by consequence the Perfection of every powerful, wise and good Being to be exercis'd in doing all that good, that Wisdom directs to be done:

AND as it is likewise self-evident, that that is the most perfect Wisdom, that proposes the best ends, and prosecutes those ends by the best means, and in the best manner;

So

Burnett. So since God is necessarily in every place in the perfection of Power, Wisdom and Goodness, he must necessarily be every where doing such acts of Goodness for such ends, and by such means, and in such manner, as his absolute Wisdom judges best.

AND in this the whole notion of government is absolv'd, in whatsoever sense we understand it, in respect as well of the conservation, as the ordering and disposal of all things.

AND if so, from all these premises put together, it does abundantly appear,

THAT there is a self-existent, absolutely perfect Being, that made and governs the World, which was the thing to be demonstrated.

THUS have I laid the first great principle, upon which the whole structure of Religion stands.

BUT, tho' we are sure of our point thus far, that there is a self-existent Being, absolutely perfect, the Maker and Governor of the World; yet since we have no notion of the perfection of this Being, but under particular and distinct ideas, this will not be a sufficient foundation for true Religion, unless we can be assur'd those ideas are right and true.

I WILL therefore proceed in the next place to inquire,

First, WHAT those particular ideas are, under which the Divine Nature is to be conceiv'd, as he is an absolutely perfect Being. And

Secondly, WHEREAS I have shewn, that the World was made, and must be govern'd by this absolutely perfect Being; I will in the next place inquire what notions we are to form of the Creation, and Government of the World, considering it, as made, and govern'd by a Being, to whom these ideas belong.

Of the Perfections or Attributes of God.

As to the ideas, under which the Divine Nature is to be conceived as God is an absolutely perfect Being, we are to recollect, that by absolute Perfection, I have already shewn, is to be meant all degrees of Being.

AND therefore the most natural way to discover and explain the particular ideas of the Divine Nature is, to enquire what degrees of Being we can conceive possible, and to attribute them to God in the highest degree, separating all defect, and imperfection from them:

AND since we have already observ'd, that there are four several degrees of Being, that we know; as some Beings are mere substance; some substances with life, some with life and sense, some with life, sense and reason; if God has all possible degrees of Being, we must not only conceive him under the notion of a substance indued with life, sense, and reason, but also with the highest degrees of these possible, without any defect, or imperfection.

IF then we inquire what degrees of Perfection we can conceive possible of substance, life, sense, and reason, and ascribe them to God in the highest degree, that we can conceive it any Perfection or Excellency to have them; we have then the highest notion of God, that we are capable of attaining to.

Or, Secondly, SINCE we have already prov'd, that whatever God is, he is essentially, and is every where, spiritually, independently, necessarily, eternally, immutably, and infinitely, (*p.* 409.) If God be a substance indued with life, sense, and reason, it must be such a life, sense, and reason, as is omnipresent, spiritual, independent, necessary, eternal, immutable, and infinite:

AND therefore, if we rightly apprehend the several terms of substance, life, sense, and reason, and annex those ideas of Omnipresence, Spirituality, Independency, Necessity, Eternity, Immutability, and infinity to them, we have then not only another way of finding out the Perfections of God, but we have likewise the highest proof, and assurance of the truth of those perfections, that we are capable of attaining to.

So that either of these ways will bring us to the same end, *viz.* the knowledge of the nature of God: But because the former is the less metaphysical, and to meaner understandings the more intelligible, I choose to proceed in

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that Method, *viz.* by inquiring, what are the highest perfections that we can *Burnett.* conceive possible of substance, life, sense, and reason, and thence to form our notions of the Divine Nature.

The Perfections of God considered as a Substance.

We will begin with the perfections of substance simply, without regard to life, sense, or reason.

By a substance I mean a Being, in opposition to a mode or manner of being.

THAT which expresses the manner how any thing is, as black, white, long, short, good, bad, and the like, we call a mode, or accident.

AND since every thing is either a being, or a mode of being, what is not a mode of being, we call a substance.

NOW as to the perfections of substance, or being simply, all Mankind conceive it a higher and more excellent degree of being, to be without beginning, than to be made: To be independent, than dependent: To be stable and fixt, certain and necessary, than evanid and transitory, precarious and contingent: To be unchangeable, than changeable: To be infinite, than finite: To be immaterial, than corporeal: To be in all places, rather than confin'd to one, or few: To last for ever, than for a time.

THESE are all evident, and allow'd perfections of substance, simply consider'd such as are as obvious to every understanding, as that being is better, than not being, or something is better, than nothing;

AND therefore, when we conceive God to be an absolutely perfect substance, we must in this way of reasoning conceive him to be an eternal, independent, necessary, immutable, spiritual, omnipresent, everlasting Being, as we have before proved in another manner, (p. 407.)

WE come now in the next place to consider the perfections of a substance indu'd with Life.

The Perfections of God consider'd as a living Substance.

By life is meant a principle of activity, or self-motion, or an ability to act; and therefore according to the degree of this activity, such is the perfection of life.

NOW all Mankind conceive, that it is a higher and more excellent degree of activity, to be able to do all things, that are possible to be done, than only to do some things: To do what we are able to do in an instant, than by degrees; by bare thought, or will, than by dependence upon means: To do it without labour and difficulty, without opposition and resistance, than otherwise: To have this active capacity all at once, than by a successive and gradual improvement: To have it last for ever, than for a time:

THESE are all evident and allow'd perfections of activity, or life, which we commonly call power:

AND therefore whilst we conceive God, as absolutely perfect in life, we necessarily ascribe to him the utmost degrees possible of power, and must by consequence conceive,

THAT he is able to do all things, and that in an instant, by his bare Will, without labour or difficulty, without opposition and resistance, without improvement, or decay of his Power, and that he never was, nor ever can be more or less powerful than he is.

BUT yet it is here to be observ'd, that since whatever God does, he does by his Will, when we say, that he can do all things, it must be understood, that he can do all things, that he can will to be done: And therefore the true extent and notion of his Power will be best conceiv'd, when we have explain'd the Perfections of the Divine Will, which shall be done hereafter in its proper place.

Burnett.

THE next thing to be consider'd is the perfections of Sense.

The Perfections of God consider'd as a Substance or Being, indued with the highest Perfection of Sense.

BY Sense is sometimes meant a faculty of perceiving Objects by the mediation of our Senses: And the Perfection of this faculty consists in its acuteness, and sagacity: But this has relation only to material Beings; and since 'tis a greater Perfection to be spiritual, than material as we have shewn, (p. 410.) in that materiality is inconsistent with Self-existence; and since it must therefore be, as it is evidently and allowedly is a greater Perfection to discern things spiritually, than by the mediation of, and dependence upon Matter: So since God is already prov'd to be a Spirit, the Perfection of this Faculty in him must consist in a most exquisite Perception of things without the mediation of material Organs, or Senses.

AND this is nothing but Understanding, which is a faculty of Reason: For 'tis the Soul only that apprehends, and perceives Objects, and this Perception is call'd Sense, in relation only to material things, which our Souls can no otherwise perceive, than by the help of our bodily Organs; which we therefore call the Senses, as they are the necessary instruments of Sensation, or Perception.

THIS Notion of Sense, as it signifies understanding, does not belong to this place, but must be consider'd under the perfections of Reason.

THAT which I mean here by sense, is a sensation or perception of Pleasure, or Pain.

AND as a life of Pleasure is evidently, and indisputably more valuable and excellent, than that of Pain, which always arises from some imperfection and defect;

AND as it is evidently more eligible to be actually sensible of Pleasure, than only to be capable of it;

AND as it is undoubtedly better to have always been in Pleasure, and always to continue so, and to have all degrees of it, than otherwise:

So in ascribing to God the Perfections of Sense, we must conceive him to be indued with the most exquisite and actual perception of all possible degrees of Pleasure, without any possibility of Pain, or of having more or less Pleasure, than he actually has, or ever had, or always will have.

AND this we call the Happiness of God.

THE last thing to be inquired into is the Perfections of Reason.

The Perfections of God consider'd as a Substance indued with the highest degrees of Reason.

BY Reason we usually mean a principle of thought, which according as it exerts its self differently, is conceiv'd under the different names of Understanding, and Will,

BY the Understanding is meant, that operation of the Mind, by which we not only simply apprehend Objects, and the natures of them, as they lie severally, and jointly before us, but also can compare, and judge of their several relations, and from thence draw inferences, and raise observations, and propound designs, and provide for the consequences of them:

ALL this is comprehended under the general notion of Understanding:

BUT that part of it more particularly, which relates to the apprehending and judging of the natures and relations of things, we call Knowledge.

AND that by which we propound designs, and find out proper means for the attainment of them, we distinguish by speculative Wisdom, in opposition to practical Wisdom, which belongs to the Will, as shall be shewn by and by.

So that if we are to conceive of God, as absolutely perfect in Reason, we *Burnett*. must conceive him to have all possible degrees of Knowledge and Wisdom, without any degree of Imperfection.

AND therefore, whereas 'tis evidently an imperfection of Knowledge to know, but in part, or to attain to our Knowledge by steps and degrees, by study and time, by inference and observation: To be liable to error, confusion, or forgetfulness:

AND as it is an apparent, and allow'd defect of Wisdom, to propose no End, or to aim at a foolish, or unreasonable End, or to prosecute a right End by improper means, in an improper manner, or season:

So if we would rightly conceive of God, we must separate all these Imperfections from him; and must conclude, that he not only understands all things, that are possible to be known, and therefore all things that are, or are possible to be; but that he knows them all at once, without any possibility of improvement or mistake, alteration or decay: And that he cannot act without an End, or be mistaken in it, or in the means, manner, or season of pursuing it: And as he knew, as much as he does, and was as wise as he is from all Eternity past; so he is as wise as he can be, and knows as much as he can know to all Eternity to come.

The Perfections of the Will.

THE other faculty of Reason, which we call the Will, is, that by which we determine our operations in the way of Choice.

THIS is likewise represented by various names, which we call Passions, according to the different manner of its actings, and the different consideration of the objects, that it acts upon, or has relation to,

THESE we will consider by and by; but first, it will be necessary to understand rightly the nature of the rational Will in general, and what are the Perfections of it.

BY the Will then, I mean that faculty, by which we choose and determine our operations:

BUT then, as it is in the very nature of it suppos'd to be a faculty of Reason, so it is by consequence necessarily to be suppos'd, that it must naturally choose and determine upon Reason; unless we could be so absurd, as to say, that 'tis the nature of a rational faculty to act without Reason.

AND tho' tis certain, that Mankind do not always follow the best, and truest Reason, but very often act directly contrary to it, yet the Will is never determin'd without some Reason or other, how impertinent or insufficient soever it be in its own nature.

AND as it is evident, that the reasons, or motives that incline the Will to choose may be various, we must therefore conceive it to be such a faculty, by which we can choose variously, according to the various reasons, or motives, that are offer'd to us:

I SAY, according to the various reasons, or motives: For unless we suppose some rational motive to influence the choice, we have nothing to distinguish the operations of rational Creatures, from those of Brutes.

FOR they can determine their operations variously, as well as we; but yet, as they do not seem to act upon comparative consideration, and as we do not perceive they know their own operations, or propose any Ends to themselves in them; so they cannot properly be called choice.

WE commonly conceive, that they are moved only by sensitive impressions, and that which strikes their present Sense with strongest impulse, their appetites are, as it were, necessarily inclin'd to. And could we suppose a Brute placed between two objects equally striking his Sense, and therefore equally inviting the appetite, it has been made a doubt, whether he could determine himself to either, but whether like a Needle between two Loadstones, he would not equally incline to both.

BUT

Burnett. BUT be this as it will, unless we suppose him to be moved to action by some rational consideration, he cannot be said to choose:

AND as that which cannot choose its own operations, must by consequence be supposed under a natural necessity of acting only in such and such a manner, and measure, according to the efficiency of those natural causes, upon which its operations depend:

SO in opposition to this necessity, that which has a faculty of choosing is said to be free.

AND tho' this term may be very properly applied to persons, who choose; or to the actions, which are the Effects of such a choice, so that they may both be said to be free; yet it is very improperly said of the Will it self, that it is free: Because Freedom, and Will, are but different words for the same thing; and when we say a Man is free, we mean, that he has a Will, and can choose, and determine his own operations, and is not under any necessity of acting so, or so, but can act this way, or that way, according as he has reason for it.

THIS I take to be the true notion of this faculty, which we call the Will, as likewise of the liberty of it.

AND if this be true, that the nature of the Will, and of that Freedom we ascribe to Mankind in respect of it, consists in choosing upon reason; from hence it will follow, that the more reason we have for the choice of any thing, as our choice is the more rational and perfect, so is it likewise the more free: And by consequence, when our Wills choose nothing but what is reasonable to be chosen, and those things most, that are most reasonable, and when our actions are exactly conformable to our Wills, then we are in a true state of rational and perfect Freedom.

THIS is the highest Perfection of Freedom, consider'd in its self; and tho' this be an excellent and eligible state of Being, yet it would be still more eligible, and excellent, to be sure of its continuance, without any possible hazard of an End, or Alteration:

And therefore if we would conceive of God, as we ought to do in ascribing to him the perfections of Reason, we must conceive him to be indued with an absolute Freedom, or Power of self-determination upon principles of Reason; that he is not bound down to this, or that object, or manner, or measure of acting, by any thing, but Reason; but can act variously, according as he has Reason for it; that is, he can act differently upon different objects, and contrarily upon contrary objects; and that too in different manners and degrees, according as he has different or contrary Reasons:

AND this we call the Freedom of God.

BUT then *Secondly*, as he has a Power of determining his operations differently, according as his Reason directs, so we must conceive he has this in the highest degree possible; and therefore he must be incapable of determining his operations otherwise, that is, either without or contrary to Reason, or otherwise, than according to the measure and degree of Reason he has for his operations: And by consequence he cannot but incline to those things most, that he has most reason for, and that without any possibility of the discontinuance of this, or of its alteration or decay, or any other defect or imperfection.

THIS is the perfection of rational Freedom; and this perfection of Freedom, which we see consists in an immutable conformity of the Will to the dictates of Reason, we call Holiness.

But yet here it is to be observ'd, (for the right understanding of the several terms by which we commonly speak of the Divine Nature) that, as Reason has different names according to its different objects, and by consequence, that which is in general call'd Understanding, is, at other times, call'd Wisdom, when consider'd, as having relation to ends and means; so it is here;

AND therefore, tho' this perfect conformity of the Will, to the dictates of Reason, be in general call'd Holiness; yet when Reason is consider'd, as directing any thing, as a means to an end, and the Will is determin'd to pursue that end,

by

by those means; then the conformity of the Will, to the dictates of Reason, *Burnett.* in this case, may be call'd the Wisdom of the Will.

AND as that Wisdom, which we before have taken notice of, as an act of the Understanding, which considers only the natures, and relations of things, without any determination toward them, is therefore call'd speculative Wisdom; so this Wisdom, which is here said to be an act of the Will, may be call'd practical Wisdom.

AND as this determination of the Will in God is invariable; so this is sometimes call'd, when spoken of the Divine Nature, the immutability of God; that is, the moral immutability in contradistinction to the natural immutability of the Divine Nature, which we have before taken notice of, (p. 407.)

BUT nevertheless, when we consider the Will only and simply, as acting in conformity to the dictates of Reason, without respect to any thing else, it is then properly call'd Holiness, however we may in different respects represent it under different names.

AND as the Will of God is always invariably determin'd by Reason, and the Reason of God is always right, and cannot possibly be mistaken; so this invariable determination of the Divine Will, according to the dictates of his infallible Reason, is what we mean by the Holiness of God.

Corollaries from the Holiness of God.

FROM this notion of the Holiness of God, several things will follow: For, IF the Will and Operations of God are immutably conformable to his Reason, it is natural to infer, that he cannot will, or act any thing contrary to his Knowledge and Wisdom, which are included in the notion of Reason.

First, HE cannot will or act any thing contrary to his Knowledge.

BY Knowledge is meant the perception of things, as they are, whether in respect of their own nature, consider'd simply in themselves, or in the relation they stand in to others; and by consequence, Knowledge supposes the reality, or in some sense the existence of the thing known, so far as it is known.

AND therefore, as it is plain, that nothing, or that which has no being, cannot be perceiv'd, and therefore not known to be; so it is as plain, that those things, that have a being, cannot be perceiv'd, and therefore not known to be, what they really are not; because this is to perceive, and know what is not, or nothing.

AND therefore, as God knows all things, he must know them only, as they really are; and he cannot know them to be otherwise, that is, he cannot know things past, but as really past, nor otherwise, than as they were when present; nor things future, but as future, nor otherwise, than they will be, when they come to pass; nor things possible, but as possible, nor otherwise, than they shall be, when brought into actual being.

AND if so, then if his Will, and Operations be always conformable to his Knowledge, they must be always conformable to the reality of things, as they are; so as not to be capable of willing any thing in its nature to be, what he at the same time knows it not to be, either simply, or relatively consider'd; or of doing any thing contrary, to what he knows the natures and relations, and by consequence, the reasons of things require.

AND if so, since the reality of things, as they are in their natures, and relations, is the very notion of Truth; it will follow, that he cannot will, or act any thing contrary to Truth; so that if God be Holy, he must be immutably True.

Secondly, As God cannot will, or act any thing contrary to his Knowledge; so neither can he to his Wisdom.

WISDOM, in the very nature of it, supposes an End, and an End as naturally implies some Good: For by an End is meant that Reason or Motive, that inclines an Agent to act; and that which right Reason approves, as convenient for an Agent to aim at, and act for, is the very notion of Good: And therefore, if God cannot will, or act any thing, but what is agreeable to his Wisdom,

urnett. dom, he must always will, and act with an intention of some Good; and as it is self-evident, that an absolutely perfect Being can want no Good to himself, it must therefore follow, that it must be some Good to his Creatures.

So that from the Holiness of God, we are assur'd of his Goodness, that he never wills, or acts any thing, but for the Good of his Creatures.

BUT then, as Wisdom supposes an End, so does it a wise and rational End; that is, such an End, as is suitable to the nature of things, and such, as is capable of being attain'd:

AND therefore, tho' God be immutably dispos'd to do Good to his Creatures, and cannot will, or act any thing but for that End; yet as his Goodness is a wise Goodness, he cannot be supposed to will, or do Good to his Creatures, but in such manner, and degree, as they are capable, and shall best answer the End of doing Good.

So that when we speak of the Goodness of God, we must mean an immutable disposition of the Divine Mind, to do Good to his Creatures, according to their several natures, and capacities.

Now according as the circumstances, and capacities of Mankind are different; so this attribute is distinguish'd by different names:

WHEN it has relation to Punishment, we call it Justice; to Pardon, Mercy; to Moderation in Punishment, Equity; to Slowness, Patience and the like: But yet, as all these are but so many several ways of doing Good, and so many different operations intended for that End; so they are all comprehended under the general notion of Goodness:

AND as Goodness, we see, is the necessary result of Holiness, and these several operations the natural result of Goodness; so we must as necessarily conceive the Divine Nature to be dispos'd to these several operations of Justice and Mercy, &c. as we conceive him to be holy, and good.

BUT then, as Holiness always acts according to Reason, and Goodness disposes the Divine Nature to do good to his Creatures, in such manner and degree, as they are capable; so we must conceive of his Justice and Mercy; namely, that tho' God be dispos'd to punish, or pardon, as there is occasion, and the natures of things require; yet it must be only in such manner, and measure, and season, as his Wisdom sees best for the good of his Creatures.

AND if so, from all this we see the absurdity of those notions, that are commonly drawn from the absolute Sovereignty of God, as an Attribute of the Divine Nature, denoting a Power of dealing with his Creatures, as he pleases, without any regard to right or wrong.

FOR according to these reasonings, we plainly see there is no such Attribute belonging to the Divine Nature.

SOVEREIGNTY is not properly a Perfection of the Divine Nature in itself, but only an extrinick denomination, arising from the relation he bears to the World, as his Creatures; and it properly signifies no more, than a right of Dominion, or Government; which, as God is holy, can be only a Right of disposing, or dealing with his Creatures, according to his infallible Reason: that is, as we have now shewn, according to his Knowledge of the natures, and capacities of his Creatures, and according as his Wisdom judges best for their good.

AND thus we are to conceive of the Perfections of the Divine Will.

AND from hence we may be able to explain the true extent of God's Power: For as we have already observ'd, (*p.* 413.) that whatever he does, he does by his Will, and therefore can do, whatever he can will; so we may say, on the other hand, that what he cannot will, he cannot do; and that not for any defect of Power, but because 'tis contrary to his Reason to will it:

AND therefore, *First*, as God cannot will any thing contrary to his Knowledge; so he cannot make any thing not to be, at the same time that he knows it is; nor any thing to be, what he knows it not to be: He cannot make Good Evil, nor Evil Good; Truth to be Falshood, nor Falshood Truth: In a word, he cannot make a thing to be, and not to be; to be so and so related,

lated, and not to be so, and so related at the same time, and in the same respect; which is what we call a Contradiction. Burnett.

Secondly, As he cannot will any thing contrary to Truth, so it is impossible for God to lye; to do or say any thing that is false.

Thirdly, As he cannot will any thing contrary to Wisdom, and therefore to Goodness; so 'tis impossible for God to make any Creature, that it should be miserable; or after it is made, to make it miserable, merely for the sake of misery.

THESE seem to be certain, and undeniable conclusions; which not only shew us the notion of God's Power, but also the reason of the bounds we set to it.

AND thus much might suffice upon this head, *viz.* the Perfections of the rational Will, and how far they belong to God:

BUT because the various operations of the Will are usually distinguish'd under different names, which we call Affections, or Passions; it will not be amiss to inquire a little into the nature of these Passions, and how far they ought to be ascrib'd to God.

Of the Passions.

AND here it is to be observ'd, that, tho' these operations, which we call Passions in us, are really the motions of the rational Will; yet they chiefly shew themselves in the sensitive part, as being usually attended with an extraordinary commotion of our Spirits:

AND they are call'd Passions, either because they are effects sometimes excited in the Mind, by the operation of the Blood and Spirits; or, because there is usually a commotion excited in the Blood and Spirits by these inward operations of the Mind; in both which respects they agree with the usual notion of Passion, which is to receive the effect of an Agent.

Now Because these Passions are very often occasion'd by, or attended with these bodily commotions, Men are generally cautious, how they ascribe them to God, as seeming to imply some imperfections; and when they do it, 'tis usually understood to be spoken after the manner of Men.

WHEREAS, if they be, as certainly they are, real motions and affections of the rational Soul, there can be no doubt, but that there is something in the nature of God, consider'd as a perfectly rational Being, analogous to these affections in us, tho' infinitely remov'd from those imperfections, with which they are attended in us: And we may as well refuse to ascribe the faculty of Knowledge to God, because we know by ratiocination; as deny all rational Affections to him, because they are excited in us by Passion: We have no room to boggle at the one more than the other; but, provided we separate all Imperfections from them, we may as safely ascribe them to God, as any other faculty of the Mind. For indeed they are but the several modifications of the Will, or so many various modes, or ways of representing its operations in the pursuit of good, and avoiding evil; for according as any object appears to the understanding to be good or evil, grateful or ungrateful; so the Will is inclin'd or averse to it, embraces, or rejects it: And this inclination of the Will to good, we call Love, and the aversion to evil, Hatred: and according as the good, or evil, is variously consider'd, either as present, or future; so these dispositions of the Will receive various denominations.

If the good, or evil, be consider'd as present, because the Will cannot embrace what the Understanding approves, without some complacency in it, nor shews its aversion to a present evil, without some disturbance at it, therefore that general inclination of the Will to good, which is called Love, is then called Delight and Joy; and that general aversion to evil, which is call'd Hatred, is then distinguish'd by Grief, or Anger.

If the good, or evil, be consider'd, as future, then the Love is call'd Desire, and Hope; and the Hatred, Fear, and the like:

Burnett. So that we see what we call Affections, or Passions, are really nothing, but the various dispositions of the Will towards good, or evil, differently consider'd, as to time, and so receiving various names; and therefore they ought to be ascrib'd to God, whilst we conceive him to be indued with the perfections of the rational Will.

BUT then, we must observe, that, as there is nothing future to God, but all things are eternally present to him; so those affections, that arise from the good, or evil, consider'd as future, such as hope, desire, or fear, cannot be ascrib'd to him, any otherwise, than in condescension to our Weakness; and they must be always understood, as spoken after the manner of Men:

BUT as for such of them, as relate to a present good, or evil, such as delight and joy, grief or anger; there is doubtless something in the Divine Nature, as I said, analogous to these operations in us, tho' altogether without our imperfections:

AND therefore, as we love what appears good to us with a sensitive complacency; so God has such a disposition to all good, as to take a rational pleasure in it.

AND tho' God cannot be said to grieve, or be angry, as they imply a discomposure, and disturbance in us; yet there is doubtless such an aversion to all evil in the Divine Mind, as to produce in his operations such effects as are the tokens of those Passions in us: There is a real dislike, tho' without disorder; there is a rational motion, tho' without disturbance.

THUS far therefore we may ascribe these Affections to God.

BUT then we must remember, that these Affections are, as I said before, (p. 419.) but the various motions of the Will; and by consequence, as it is the perfection of the Divine Will, to be immutably conformable to the dictates of Reason; so must these affections in God be always conceiv'd to be: And therefore,

First, As God cannot will; so we must conclude, that he cannot love, or hate without Reason; nor in any degree, but what he has Reason for: And therefore, as he cannot be said, even to love himself, merely because he will, but because he has Reason for it, as being perfect, and worthy to be lov'd; so he must love himself infinitely, because he is infinitely perfect, and every thing else in such degree, as it comes nearer to his Perfection.

AND thus likewise he must be said to hate, not because he will, but because the thing he hates is evil; and by consequence he hates it, only in such a degree, and proportion, as it is so.

Secondly, As his Will is, so we must conceive his Love and Hatred to be immutably conformable to his Knowledge and Wisdom, and by consequence to Truth and Goodness; so as to love and hate every thing, so far as it is agreeable, or disagreeable to Truth, and so far as it is beneficial, or hurtful to his Creatures.

AND thus we are to conceive of God, with respect to the Affections or Passions; and with this we shall conclude, what we propos'd to say concerning the perfections of the Divine Nature; from all which put together we have as clear a view, and as full a discovery of it, as our finite powers are capable of attaining to, by the principles of Reason only.

AND if all this whole Series of conclusions be true, as they appear to be demonstratively so; from hence I may draw this general Corollary, *viz.*

Corollary.

THAT whatsoever notions of God are deliver'd to us, contrary to these, are so far contrary to truth; and so far as they are agreeable to these, so far we have reason to think them true.

AND if so, from hence it will follow, that, since we have a Book, we call the Scriptures, wherein the Nature of God is exactly represented, agreeable to these notions here demonstrated, as a self-existent, independent, necessary, immutable, incorporeal, indivisible, infinite, omnipresent, everlasting, omnipotent, happy

happy Being, indued with the utmost perfection of Knowledge, Wisdom, Holiness, Goodness, and Truth; so far it is worthy to be receiv'd as true. Burnett.

THUS I have dispatch'd the first thing to be consider'd, *viz.* how we are to conceive of God, as an absolutely perfect Nature, or Being.

AND these notions I lay down as my Postulata, which I shall take for granted all along; and upon this Basis I will endeavour to erect, in a chain of certain, and easy consequences, the whole fabrick of true Religion, whether natural, or reveal'd.

AND in order to this, whereas I have shewn that this Being, to whom these Perfections belong, is the Creator, and Governor of the World, I will, in the next place, proceed to inquire,

Secondly, WHAT notions we are to form of the Creation and Government of the World, considering it, as made and govern'd by this absolutely perfect Being.

AND in discoursing upon this, I will not trouble you with any of those impertinent subtilties, that idle, and vain Men puzzle, and confound their own, and others understanding with.

WE must expect to meet with many things of this kind in every speculation we exercise our thoughts upon: There is something in every thing that we do not, and cannot understand: But much more must we expect this, when we contemplate the nature and operations of God, whose *thoughts* must necessarily be *above our thoughts, and his ways above our ways.*

As he is an infinite Being, he must be, know, and do infinitely beyond what we can conceive: And therefore, when we are surpriz'd with difficulties about self-existence, omnipresence, prescience, the decrees of God, his immanent, and transient Actions, and his permission of evil, and the like, 'tis a sufficient answer to them all, that God is infinite, and therefore incomprehensible. These things lie in the dark, because we have not faculties sufficient for them; and 'tis not to be expected, that we should see, where we have neither light, nor eyes.

As we are finite Creatures, these difficulties cannot but be, and God would not be infinite, if it were not so. That which we are concern'd in, is, what we know, and are sure of, and we know enough for our purpose: And as I have already given you an account of what we know concerning God, as to his Nature, and Perfections, and shewn you what we are to conceive of him, consider'd, as a Being absolutely perfect; I will now proceed to the point in hand, namely, to consider his operations, and what notions we are to form of his several works of Creation, and Government of the World, as it was made, and is govern'd according to these Perfections.

Of the Creation of the World.

I WILL begin with the Creation of the World. By the World I have already shewn, is meant all things, visible and invisible, material and immaterial; except that one self-existent, absolutely perfect Being, whom we call God.

AND by the Creation of the World is meant, that all things receiv'd their whole, and intire Beings, and all that they are, from him.

Now since 'tis plain, that this one God, the Creator of all things, cannot, as he is absolutely perfect, act contrary to his nature; and therefore must do every thing suitably to his own perfections; if we do but reflect upon these several perfections, under which his nature is conceiv'd, and which we have shewn are necessarily to be ascrib'd to him; and consider him as acting according to them in the Creation of the World; this will set this great Work in an open, and easy light, and conduct us on from one thing to another, into a clear and distinct apprehension of all things, necessary to be known concerning it, for the discovery, and establishment of true Religion.

AND therefore first, as the World was the effect of God's Almighty Power, here we will begin; and if we look back, and consider what the notion of

Burnett. this Power is, and what consequences will follow from it, this will furnish us with several useful observations.

NOW by the Power of God, if you remember, I have already shewn, (*p.* 413.) is meant, his being able to do all things, in an instant, by the operation of his bare Will; and that as he can do, whatever he can will; so what he cannot will, he cannot do.

AND if so, what is the natural consequence from hence, but that, as nothing could come into being without his willing it to be; so all things must have been immediately produced, so soon as he will'd they should be? And therefore, as the World was an effect, purely voluntary, and no necessary emanation from the divine Substance; so it requir'd no other principles to raise its being from, but the bare Will of the Creator only.

WHEN this mighty Work was wrought, Reason alone cannot inform us: As it is a matter of fact, 'tis knowable only by Tradition, or Revelation: We have no principles in nature to reason from, by which it can be assign'd to any determinate time.

WE can only say in general, that the novelty of History, the known rise and progress of Arts, and Sciences, the late cultivation, and civilizing of Nations, and the small increase of Mankind, are undeniable arguments, that the World has not been of any long continuance: But how lately soe'er it might have been made, we are thus far sure, there is no point of time, beyond which it might not have been made, if God had so determin'd it to be.

AND if this be true, that God could have made the World, howsoever, and whensoever he pleas'd, by his bare willing it to be; then, as all things are equally easy to God, that he can will, and by consequence it is as easy to God to make a World, as make a Fly; so he could, as easily, make ten thousand worlds, as one.

AND as there can be no certain bounds assign'd, beyond which his works might not have been extended; so 'tis no wise unreasonable to think, that God has made more worlds, than this, that we ourselves live, and inhabit in: And as he has made us, and all other Creatures here, with such natures, powers, and properties, as are suitable to our terrestrial System; so he may, for ought we know, have fill'd the vast field of space beyond us, with various species of other Beings, with different natures, powers, and properties, and under different regulations and œconomies.

BUT how reasonable soever it may be to think this, yet 'tis what we cannot be sure of: However, I thought it not amiss to mention it, as it is highly honourable to God, and tends to very good purposes of Religion; as it enlarges our ideas, and begets in us very awful thoughts of his unbounded Power, Wisdom, and Goodness; whilst we consider them display'd in such a vast and indefinite extent of Beings.

AND thus we may reason from the Power of God.

BUT here it is to be observ'd, that when we resolve this great work of the Creation into the bare Power and Will of God, we must not conceive, that it was the effect of mere Will without Reason. No, as God is absolutely holy, and cannot act but in conformity to the dictates of his infallible Reason; so we must conclude, that in the Creation, he was guided by his Reason, and that the World by consequence was not a mere arbitrary production, but the effect of a free and rational election.

AND therefore, that he made the World no sooner, was not without Reason; and that he made it, when he did, at that time, and in this form, and order, was not merely, because he would, but because he saw it most reasonable, and fit to be done: He saw that to be the fittest time, and this the properest form, and order for it to be made in.

REASON is the rule of all his operations; and if we consider God, as acting always according to this rule, which is the notion we have before given of his Holiness; (*p.* 417.) since we have before shewn, that under this is comprehended, and by this it is implied, that he must always be directed in all his opera-

operations by his Knowledge and Wisdom, Truth and Goodness; as we must *Burnett* conceive him acting in the Creation, according to these several perfections, as his rules; so these several perfections are the natural rules to us to form our notion of his Creation by.

AND therefore first, let us consider God as acting in the Creation, according to his Knowledge; and if this be allow'd, that his Knowledge is infinite, that he could never begin to know any thing, and shall never cease to know every thing; (*p. 415.*) from hence it will follow, that he made nothing by chance, nothing, but what he eternally knew, and had a perfect, and intire Idea of, before he made it; and that every thing was made according to those eternal, and perfect Ideas of his infinite Mind.

AND if so, from hence we may conclude, that every thing must have been made perfect in its kind; and therefore, as there was nothing in any being superfluous, or redundant, useless, or unnecessary on the one hand; so there was nothing lame, or weak, or defective on the other: But on the contrary, as God made various species, orders, and classes of Beings, every Creature must have been made with nothing more, or less, than that order, or class of Beings requir'd to its perfection, according to the Divine Idea.

AND therefore every Creature, that God made, must have been at that very instant, after it was made, as perfect, as that species of Creatures would admit of: And by consequence, every Creature must not only have had all the parts, and powers, and properties of the Species intire, as to their number, nature, order, and use; but also all these in such a measure of strength, vigor, and activity, as the perfection of that Species requir'd.

THIS must be true of all the Creatures in the world; and if we apply this particularly to Man, we must conceive, that when God made Man, as soon as he was made, he must have been of necessity a perfect Man; not wanting in any thing, that the perfection of his nature, and species required, according to the state in which he was Created:

AND by consequence, since the human nature is compounded of a reasonable and sensitive principle, which we call Soul, and Body, he must have been made perfect in both these. And therefore,

First, As Man is indued with a reasonable Principle, or Soul, he must be made perfectly reasonable; that is, his understanding must have been inform'd, or at least, capable of knowing by reason every thing necessary to be known, so far as reason can discover it; and that too so soon, as his occasions should require it: And his will, and affections, must have been in a regular subordination to his understanding, so as not to choose, or reject any thing but as reason should direct, and approve; this being evidently the perfection of the rational nature, which we call Holiness.

Secondly, As the Body is made up of several parts in a certain number, order, and proportion, with such, and such faculties, and powers, adapted to such, and such ends, and uses, all which are put in conjunction with, and under the direction, and government of reason; so it must have been made perfect in these respects: And therefore, the Body of the first Man must have been perfect, not only, in its integrant parts, as to their number, order, and use, so as to have the most healthful, and vigorous constitution, the most regular crasis and disposition of blood, and humours, the most equal motion of the animal spirits, with the utmost exactness of symmetry, and proportion: As likewise all its faculties and powers, its appetites and senses intirely suited to their ends, and objects, which I call the natural perfection of the Body: But it must also have been perfectly subject to the Soul, so as not to be naturally carried towards any thing, that reason disallowed, nor in any other manner or measure, than as reason approv'd, which I call the moral perfection of the Body.

THIS must be so, if the divine operations are agreeable to his Knowledge; for otherwise he must have had an imperfect idea of his works.

BUT further, if God made all things according to his Knowledge; since he cannot begin to know any thing, he must have made every thing with a certain

Fore-

Burnett. Fore-knowledge, how it would act, when it should come into being, and what the event of its several actings would be.

AND as 'tis evident, that he made all material things, mutable; and all living beings, mortal; and all rational creatures, fallible; and all free creatures, peccable, or liable to sin; so he must have, not only foreseen all the various possible changes of the former, and all the deaths, and errors, and sins of the latter, with the cause, the manner, and circumstances of them; but also, all the possible effects, that those changes, deaths, and errors would produce for ever: And if all things were made according to this idea, he must have order'd all things so, as to answer all these several events for ever, that his work should not be disorder'd, nor his design defeated by them.

THESE are natural consequences from the Knowledge of God.

Secondly, As the World was made according to the Knowledge, so must it likewise be according to the Wisdom of God.

AND therefore, as wisdom has relation to ends, and means, and he is only truly wise, that proposes to himself the best ends, and pursues those ends by the best and properest means; so in making the world, we must conclude, that God made nothing in vain, but every thing for some end: And that he endued all his Creatures with such natures, and put them in such orders, relations, and circumstances, as were best suited to, and most proper for the attainment of that end.

AND if so (to apply and illustrate this) when we see God has made various kinds, and species of creatures to live upon the face of the Earth; if this was done according to our notion of Wisdom, he must not only have made all its various inhabitants, of such natures, organs, and dispositions, as are suited to this terrestrial Region; but he must likewise have made the Earth of such a nature, form, and magnitude, as was best, and most proper for their reception; so as that there should never be more Creatures, than it should be capable of receiving, nor any natural necessity, but what it should be capable of supplying:

AND by consequence, as it is self-evident, that Animals cannot live without proper Food; so God must not only have made enough of this for every living Creature in the world, and that too such Food, as was most proper for their use, and nourishment; but he must likewise have given them proper faculties to distinguish, and suitable powers to attain it; so as that by acting according to those faculties and powers, the life of each creature might be preserv'd, in that manner, and for that duration, which the end of their Creation requir'd.

AND as 'tis evident, that God intended, that these inhabitants of the Earth should come upon it by degrees, by the generation of one thing from another; he must not only have given every kind, and species of his Creatures, such natural dispositions, tendencies, and powers, as were adapted to this end, and purpose; but such likewise as were necessary for the preservation, and nourishment of their several offsprings:

AND as these various species of Creatures were to be dispers'd into the different parts of the Earth, and live under different climates; so he must not only have suited the several natures of his Creatures to their different situations, but the Earth likewise must be furnish'd with all such necessaries, as those different climates should require.

AND if among all these inhabitants of the Earth we consider Mankind, as sociable Creatures, and visibly intended to live together in society, as they must be made of a nature fitted for it, and dispos'd to it, and therefore, with a natural principle of Association: So they must likewise be form'd in such a manner, as Society required; and by consequence must be made with proper organs of Speech, by which they might communicate their thoughts to one another; and such an evident distinction of Faces, and Voices, by which their Persons might be certainly known from one another, because without this no Society could be maintain'd.

AND *lastly,* As this Earth, and the various Inhabitants of it, have so manifest a dependance on the heavenly Bodies, in order to their several ends, that

the

the one cannot be attain'd without the influence of the other ; so we must conceive, that the nature he has given, and the position, order, and motion, that he has placed these heavenly Bodies in, is best for the Earth, and the several Creatures living on it: So that if they had been put in any other position, order, or motion, those ends could not be naturally, or at least, not so well, or so effectually, or easily attain'd. Burnett.

AND by consequence, as the heat, and light of the heavenly Bodies is communicated differently, to the different parts of the Earth, according to their different situations, we must conclude, that this is best for those places, and that it would not have been so well for them to have more light, and heat, or in any other manner, than it is now imparted to them.

THESE are all plain, and natural consequences, which I intend only as hints, that the Reader may improve in his private Meditations: These are sufficient for my purpose, without further enlargement; and as we are taught by these, how to think of the Creation, considering it as made by a wise Being; so 'tis a wonderful satisfaction to a considering Mind, to find the World answering in all these respects, so far as we are able to see into it; by which every reasonable Man must be convinced, that it was the effect of a wise contrivance, as being such a work, as even according to our notions of Wisdom, ought to have been made in this very manner, that we now actually find it made in, in respect of the general nature and design of it.

I MIGHT now dismiss this Meditation, but that I think it proper to draw one observation more from it, for the confirmation of what I have before taken notice of, *viz.* that all things were made perfect in their kind.

FOR if all things were made for some end, and indued with such a nature as was best suited to that end; it will hence follow, that all things must have not only been made with all that the end of their several Species required, and therefore, with the whole nature of the Species; but also, that they must have had it in such manner, and degree, as was best suited to the end of the several Species, and by consequence must have been perfect in their kinds.

THIS is a point, I shall make great use of hereafter, and therefore am the more concern'd to see it well establish'd beyond all possibility of objection.

AND thus much shall suffice upon this head.

WE come now, *Thirdly*, to consider what notions we are to form of the Creation of the World, as it was made by a God of Truth.

AND in order to this, we must look back, as before, and consider what is meant by Truth. Now by this nothing more is meant, but the reality of things, as they are, either in themselves, or as they stand related to one another.

AND if all things must have been made according to Truth, since there is evidently a natural relation between the idea of all things in the Divine Mind, and the things to be form'd by it; we must conceive that all things were made accordingly; and by consequence, as God could not have an imperfect idea of his Works; so all things must be made perfect in their kind, as I said before.

AND so likewise, since there is a manifest relation between the things themselves, consider'd either as means and ends, causes and effects, faculties and objects; we must by consequence conceive, that nothing was made of this nature, but what was agreeable to these relations.

AND therefore, *first*, as has been observed before, (*p.* 424.) whatsoever natural end God made any thing for, he must in the Creation have provided suitable means for attaining it; and there must have been such a necessary agreement between those means, and that end, that the end should certainly be attain'd by those means.

AND as every thing had its nature in order to an end, and therefore, by acting according to its nature, must attain its end; so from hence it will follow, that so far as we can know the natures of things, so far we may be able to judge of their ends: and on the contrary, so far as we can find the end of any thing, so far we may certainly conclude, as to its nature, if we are able to discover

Burnett. cover what nature is necessary to that end. As there must be this agreement between natural means, and their ends; so

Secondly, THERE must likewise be between natural causes and effects: so that whatever natural powers are indued with a natural principle of causality, or an aptitude to produce such, and such effects; we must conceive, that these powers were so dispos'd, that whenever they were put into action, according to their nature, their respective effects would be naturally produc'd, and that too in proportion to their respective powers, and operations, so as that there should be a natural agreement between them.

AND therefore, as no effect can be produc'd without a cause, nor a cause be without an effect; so whatever natural effects there are, or are possible to be, they must have a cause, or power proportion'd to them; and those effects must be such, as are suitable to the nature, and power of their causes.

AND as 'tis evident to Sense, that nothing can give naturally, what it has not in its nature to give; and therefore no cause can produce any natural effect contrary to, or above its nature; so no natural effect can receive what the cause has not, or be in its nature what the cause is not.

AND therefore, rest cannot naturally produce motion, nor motion rest: Mere matter cannot produce any thing, but mere matter; nor matter and motion any thing, but matter and motion; and that too in such manner, and degree, as are suitable to the natural laws of motion.

AND so by the same reason, a substance without Life, Sense, or Reason, cannot produce a living, sensible, or rational Creature; nor can a living sensible, or rational Creature produce any other, or higher order or species of Creatures, than itself.

AND if this be true, from hence it will follow, that no living, sensible, much less rational Agent, can be produc'd by mere matter, and motion.

FOR by Life, as it signifies animal life is meant a principle of activity, or self-motion; and as 'tis evident to all observation, that matter, as matter, cannot move itself, and therefore has no principle of life in itself; so it cannot give a principle of self-motion, or life to another.

AND so likewise, as 'tis evident to every understanding, that neither matter, nor motion separately, or conjunctly do in their own nature imply, nor are in their nature indued with Sense, or Reason; so neither can they separately, or conjunctly, produce Sense, or Reason, in another.

AND if so, from hence it will follow by necessary consequence, that every rational, sensible, and living Creature must be indued with some immaterial principle, which is the cause of all their rational, sensible, or animal Operations.

AND by consequence, though we see living, sensible, and rational Creatures produced by corporeal generation; yet there is nothing naturally produc'd by that generation, but matter so and so dispos'd, according to the nature of its cause: Which being united to an immaterial principle, and that principle being by that union fitted with proper organs of operation, it is thereby render'd capable of producing such effects, as are suitable to those organs, and those ends, for which those organs were appointed.

IF any one should ask in this case, as 'tis natural enough to do, what the nature of that immaterial Principle is, that actuates a living, and sensible Being, and what becomes of it, when it dies; it ought to be a sufficient answer to say, we cannot tell; and 'tis very unreasonable in this case to expect any other answer, than this. For we can know nothing of it, but either by Revelation, Reason, or Sense: But Revelation we have none concerning it: Sense it is not the object of: And as Reason can know nothing, but by the consideration of the natures, and reasons of things; so there is nothing in the natures of things that we can reason from to form any certain Judgment by: So that to expect we should give an account of this, is to require us to know what we have not Faculties for; which is as absurd, as to expect that a blind Man should understand colours, or a deaf one sounds.

BUT thus much we may say with safety, that it is not inconsistent with *Burnett*. Reason, that there may be several degrees, and orders of immaterial Beings, with different powers, and faculties, according to their different ends; and that such of these as are made to actuate bodies, may be put into different bodies, according to their different capacities; and when those immaterial Beings are separated from these bodies, so that the bodies are dead, it is not inconsistent to imagine, that they may transmigrate into other bodies; and when they have finish'd that course, they were made for, they may, either at last be annihilated, or if they are capable of any reward, God may have provided proper recompences for them, according to their several natures, and capacities.

THERE is nothing in all this, but what is reasonable. But be this as it will, 'tis nothing to us: We are only concern'd in the thing itself, whether those operations of Life and Sense in Animals, proceed from mere matter and motion, or not, which we have already shewn, they cannot do; and therefore must proceed from something immaterial, how little soever we know of such Beings.

I HAVE been the longer upon this point, not only because it is an useful meditation in general, and often comes into dispute; but also as it is particularly necessary to my design: For in this Discourse I have frequent occasion to speak of the rational Soul, as a principle distinct from the Body; and I think it ought not to be taken for granted, especially when any argument is built upon it.

Thirdly, As there is such a necessary relation between natural causes and their effects; so is there likewise between natural faculties, and their objects: And if the world was made accordingly, from hence it will follow:

THAT whatever faculty God made, he must have provided a suitable object for it, and for every object a suitable faculty, and there must be a natural agreement between them:

AND if so, as we may from hence conclude on the one hand, that whatever object he saw necessary by any Creature to be desir'd, in order to the enjoyment of it; or fear'd in order to the shunning it, he must have given his Creatures suitable appetites to desire, and suitable fears to shun: And whatever is necessary to be perceiv'd, or understood, he must have given them Faculties to perceive, and understand; and that too in such proportion, and degree, as their nature, order, and necessities require.

So, on the other hand, we may likewise conclude, that whatever our natural appetites crave, or our natural fears suggest, must not only have a correspondent Being; but also are proper to be desir'd and fear'd:

AND that whatever the senses of all sensible Beings perceive, and the understandings of all reasonable Beings dictate at all times, and all places alike, must not only be; but be as they are perceiv'd, and understood to be; that is, must be certainly, and undoubtedly true.

AND if so, we have here a reason in the nature of things for the truth of that common, and known maxim, That an uniform, and universal consent of all mankind, concerning any thing which is the proper object of their faculties, must be a certain and undeniable argument of the truth of that thing, they consent in.

THUS we see in general what notions we are to conceive of the Creation of the world, considering it, as made by a God of truth.

WE come now *fourthly* to consider the Creation, as the effect of the goodness of Good, and what notions we are to form of it in this respect.

AND if we look back, and consider, that the goodness of God consists in an immutable disposition to do good to his creatures, according as their natures are capable of it; from hence we must conclude, that he made every creature to do them good, and with a design they should be happy according to their natures; and he must have given them such means, and put them in such a state, as was most proper to attain their happiness: And by consequence, that every

Burnett. every thing, by acting according to the nature it was made of, and that state of being it was placed in, must be as happy as it was capable of being: And if so, then to apply, and illustrate this.

First, SINCE 'tis evident there are several degrees and kinds of creatures, it will follow; That they must have been made for such kinds and degrees of happiness, as they are naturally capable of: And therefore,

As there are some kinds of creatures, that are not capable of happiness themselves, as having neither Life nor Sense; so we must conclude, that they must be intended for the happiness of others; and that, as there was nothing made of this kind, but was some way or other proper for, and capable of contributing to this End; so by being us'd according to their Natures, that End would be effectually attained, so far as they could contribute towards it.

AGAIN, As there are other creatures, which, tho' they are indued with Life and Sense, yet seem absolutely necessary for the happiness of Man; so we must conclude, that such creatures were so far intended for his Use.

BUT as they are capable of some degrees of happiness themselves, we must as necessarily conclude, That it was their Maker's intention, that they should be happy in such kind, and degree, so far as should consist with that higher End of their being useful to the happiness of Man.

AND as there was nothing made of this kind, but was made of such a nature, and provided with such means, and placed in such a state, as was suitable to its End; so every thing, by acting according to its Nature, would not only attain its own happiness, but also by being us'd by Man, according to its Nature, in such manner, as is suitable to the Nature of Man, it must effectually contribute to the happiness of Man.

AGAIN, As Man, considered in himself, is composed of two Natures, a sensitive Body, and a rational Soul, join'd together, having different faculties, fitted for different objects, each capable of different kinds of happiness:

So we must conclude, That God made Man, that he should be happy both in Body and Soul, according to their different natures and capacities; that is, the Body in such an enjoyment of a sensitive, and the Soul in such an enjoyment of a rational happiness, as their nature and state of conjunction is capable of: And that he was, not only provided with such proper means, and placed in such a proper state, as was suitable to this happiness; but by acting according to his nature, and using those means in a natural way, according to the state in which he was placed, he would effectually attain his happiness:

AND if so, then first, as 'tis evident, that the rational nature has a faculty, by which it can consider, and apprehend the natures and reasons of things; and another faculty of self-determination, that is, of chusing and acting, according as reason judges any thing fit to be chosen, or done; so it will follow,

THAT Mankind, as being rational creatures, and made, as we have before shewn, in a state of perfection, must not only have been provided, so soon as they were made, with all the necessary means of every thing necessary to be known; and furnish'd with sufficient power, with suitable rules and motives to do whatever Reason should direct to be done, if they would consider, and do them; but also by considering and acting accordingly, they must have been as happy in their rational nature, as such a nature is naturally capable of.

AND so *secondly*, As the bodily nature of Man is composed of several Faculties, and Powers, having senses, and appetites suited to, and carried towards certain objects; so it will follow, That in the Creation, God not only made objects for those Powers, and Faculties, as we before observed, (p. 427.) and put Man in such a state, as was most proper for the enjoyment of them; but also, that in the enjoyment of those objects, he must have been as happy, in respect of his body, as his bodily nature is capable of being.

BUT then, as the state, in which Man was made, was not only a state, wherein these two natures were united; but so united, as I have shewn before, that one part was put in a subordination to the other; the powers and operations

of the Body being placed under the superior direction of the Mind, which is *Burnett.*
the moral perfection of his nature : So it will follow,

T H A T Man could no otherwise attain his end of being happy, but by acting according to that subordination, and keeping all the operations of the Body in their subjection to the Mind ; but on the contrary, so far as this moral perfection of his Faculties should be at any time wanting, so far he must be wanting of perfect happiness.

Lastly, **I F** all this be true, that Mankind were made for happiness, according to their nature, and therefore a happiness both of Body and Soul ; the Soul in the exercise of its rational Faculties, on rational objects, in a rational manner ; the Body in the exercise of its Faculties upon sensitive Objects, in a due subjection to Reason :

A N D if it be true that Mankind were made in such a state, and furnish'd with such means, as were most proper for their happiness ; and by acting accordingly, might attain their happiness.

I F all this, I say, be true ; then, if it shall appear hereafter, as shall be proved in its place, that this happiness of the Body and Soul of Man was to be everlasting ; from hence it will follow, that Man was not only immortal, as to his Soul, and made of such a bodily strength of constitution, as was naturally capable of being continued for ever ; But also, that, if there was any natural means necessary for its preservation and continuance, he must have been furnish'd with them ; and by a due application of those means, for that end, he must have reaped the benefit of them.

T H E S E are the notions we cannot but receive, whilst we consider the happiness of human nature simply, and in itself. But

Secondly, **M A N** may likewise be considered, as he stands in relation to others : And as in this respect he has not only Faculties fitted for Society ; but finds that Society is necessary to his happiness ; so we must conclude, that he was not only made, and intended for Society ; but provided with such Society, as his happiness requir'd ; and made of such a nature, and put in such a state, and furnish'd with such means, as were most proper to make that Society a happiness.

A N D if so, then since 'tis evident, that Mankind were not only made with faculties of speech, by which they might converse one with another ; and therefore must have been furnish'd with proper language ; but also with another faculty, by which their species might be multiplied ; and therefore must be supplied with proper means for this : From hence we must conclude, that the first Society of Mankind, at the Creation, was not of Man with Man, but of Man with Woman ; and that too in such proportion of number, as was best for this end of increasing the Species, and most for the happiness of Society.

A N D as no Society can be happy without mutual benevolence, or a disposition to assist, and do good to one another ; so we must conceive, that Mankind must not only have been made with this natural disposition, but was placed in such a state, as was suitable to it ; that is, such a state as was best fitted for the cherishing, and preservation of this natural disposition.

A N D therefore since all Mankind, be they more or fewer, were originally made of the same nature, with the same natural desires, and necessities ; by the means of which they might not only desire, and stand in need of the same things at the same time, from whence there might arise contention, and misery ; so from hence we must conclude, that whatever number of Men and Women were made, as they were all made for happiness in Society, there must have been enough of every thing made to satisfy the desires and necessities of every one ; so as that no one should want what another had, which could be necessary to his happiness.

B U T then, as Man is a rational creature, and by consequence his happiness a rational happiness, and such as depends upon a due subordination of his Appetites to reason ; (*p. 428.*) so tho' God made enough of every thing to satisfy the desires and necessities of every Man ; yet this could no otherwise contribute

Burnett. bute to his happiness, than as his desires and necessities should be regulated by Reason.

AND if so, then since we have already shewn (p. 424.) that every thing had a nature suited to its end; we must conclude, that Mankind were originally made of such a nature, as not to desire any thing but what they wanted; nor any thing in any other manner, measure, or season, than their wants required, or should be consistent with that natural disposition they were created with, of mutual benevolence to one another.

AND if all this be true, from hence it will follow, that the natural state of Man, by which I mean that state in which he was first made; tho' it was a state, wherein all things must necessarily have been common; yet it could not be a state of war and contention, but the most contrary to it possible. For if want was the rule of their desires, since there was enough of every thing, for every body's wants, there could in nature and reason be no need of Strife; and as every one had a natural love to every one, there could be no inclination to it.

THIS doubtless must have been the natural state of Mankind, supposing there were ever so many persons made; but considering what we have already said, it is more than probable, and very natural to conceive, that there was but one Man and Woman originally made.

FOR since Mankind were to be placed in such a state of life as was best for the preservation of mutual benevolence; it seems to be naturally proper for this purpose, that the race should be derived from one Man and Woman; that being all children of the same common Parents, and all join'd in the same common Relation; as they were undivided in their Original, so they should be as undivided in their Affections. For we find by Experience, that the affection that is seen among single persons, does by degrees beget a friendship of Families, and this as naturally spreads, and enlarges itself into Societies of Towns, and Cities, and Nations. And therefore as this was the most likely way to promote, and preserve mutual love in the world, especially in the first beginning of it; we may naturally conceive, that this was the first state of Mankind; and that there was, at the first Creation of the World, but one Man and Woman made, from whom all Mankind were to descend.

THUS we see how we are to conceive of the Creation of the world, considering it as made by the goodness of God; and with this I shall conclude my observations upon this head, from the perfections of the divine Nature.

THERE are a great many other considerations which this method of reasoning would furnish us withal; but these I take to be the most material, and such as in my following Discourse will be most useful; and therefore I will not be tedious beyond what is necessary: But supposing these deductions to be true, as founded upon certain and undoubted principles, we will infer, as has been done before,

THAT so far as we have any history, or tradition of the Creation, which is found to agree with these Conclusions; so far we have reason to conclude it true.

NOW such a history we have deliver'd by *Moses*, which is the only book we know of in the world, that gives us any account of this; and in this history of the Creation, we are not only told, that every thing was made by the power of God; but that this power was exerted, and every thing made, as we have before shewn, it ought to be, by the bare act of the divine will, or internal word of God, saying, Let such a thing be, and it was so.

AND that he made every thing good, that is, every thing perfect, every way suited to its End, and naturally capable of attaining it:

AND that when he made Man, he not only made him good, but after his own Image or Likeness; under which is comprehended all, that can be meant by Perfection and Happiness:

AND as this Happiness was to be, as shall be shewn, a Happiness both of Body and Soul for ever; and therefore there was a necessity of some means, by which

which the Body might be preserv'd in being; so we are here told of a Tree of *Burnett*. Life, which we may reasonably think might be intended, as a preservative against all decays of Nature, and a remedy for all accidental injuries, if any such can be suppos'd in so pure and perfect a state of Being.

AND as it was necessary that Man, as a sociable Creature, made in a state of Perfection, and therefore capable of Society so soon as he was made, should be provided with Society proper for him: And as we have shewn, that this ought to be a Society, not of Man with Man, but of Man with Woman; and that too, of one Man with one Woman; so we are here told it was accordingly: And therefore this account being agreeable to our foregoing Reasonings, which appear to be demonstratively true; so far we have reason, from the nature of things, to conclude this account of *Moses* to be true.

THUS have I done with the two first Points, namely, the absolute Perfection of God, and the relation he bears to the World, as its Creator: And before I proceed to the next thing, it may be proper to shew what obligations of Duty arise from hence; and how these two Considerations, properly applied, will bring us to the Law of Nature, which is so much talk'd of, and sought after. For

First, As God is absolutely perfect, and as we have already shewn, loves every thing only in such a degree, as it comes nearer to his Perfection; so by consequence, the only way to please God, is to be like him; and therefore it must be in the Nature of things our Duty to endeavour to be perfect, as he is perfect.

AND as those Perfections, which are imitable in him, are his Wisdom and Holiness, Truth and Goodness, it is a natural Duty to endeavour to be Wise and Holy, True and Good, as he is; and by consequence, whatever is implied in these Perfections in God, which we are capable of imitating him in, is a natural Duty requir'd of us, if we would be acceptable to him.

AND so likewise *Secondly*, As God is the Creator of the World, it is natural to infer, that all the Powers, and Faculties, God has given us, should be employed in such a Way, as is suitable to the End they were given for: And as they were made in a due subjection to Reason; (and therefore it must be the will of God, that this subjection be preserv'd, and so far as it is lost, recover'd) so from hence it will follow, that our Faculties should not be exercis'd on any other objects, or in any other manner, than Reason approves; and when we find in ourselves any tendencies to the contrary, it must be our Duty to suppress and subdue them.

AND so again *Thirdly*, As God has put us in several Relations, not only to himself, but one another, it is his will that we should behave ourselves suitably to those Relations; and therefore whatever Actions those Relations naturally require of us, are so many natural Laws impos'd on us.

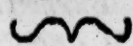
So that if we do but consider what the several Relations, we bear to one another, are, and what Actions necessarily arise from those Relations, this will give us a view into those Laws, which Nature obliges us to in this respect.

THIS is a natural and proper method of proceeding on this Subject; but this will not answer my design; and therefore I will go on as I at first propos'd, namely,

Thirdly, To inquire what notions we are to form of the government of the World, considering it as govern'd by an absolutely perfect Being.

AND in this inquiry I must proceed in the foregoing method: And, since God, as an absolutely perfect Being, cannot act contrary to his Nature and Perfections, we must here again consider his Perfections, as so many Rules, by which to form our notions of his operations in the Government, as we have already done in the Creation of the World; and this will afford us as clear a notion of it as Reason alone can furnish us withal.

Burnett.



Of the Government of the World:

I WILL begin my Observations from his Knowledge and Wisdom; and if we reflect upon what has been already prov'd, (*p.* 415.) That he cannot begin to know any thing, and can never cease to know every thing; and that he cannot do any thing weakly, or erroneously, in respect either of the End, the Means, the Manner, or Season of acting;

FROM hence we must conclude, that nothing can happen in the World by chance; that is, nothing without his Knowledge foreseeing it, and his Wisdom disposing it for some End: And howsoever he orders it, it must be, all things consider'd, always for the best; not only in respect of the End itself, but also in respect of the suitableness of the Means, and the seasonableness of the Time: So that whatever God does, we must conceive nothing could have been better; howsoever 'tis brought about, no means could have been more proper; and whensoever it comes to pass, no time could be more convenient.

How hard soever it may be to our weak and shallow understandings to comprehend this; yet we are certain it must be so, if we have right notions of the Divine Knowledge and Wisdom.

FOR there can be no room to doubt, but that he who knows the Natures and Ends of things, as perfectly as he knows any thing, and cannot possibly be mistaken, is equally capable of governing all things, as any thing; because his Knowledge and Wisdom being infinite, supposing even the World to be so, there would be but the same proportion between them, as of one to one: So that if he is qualified to order one, he is equally so for all.

Secondly, As God is shewn to be in his Nature true; so must he be also in his Government, so as not to do any thing contrary to Truth.

AND therefore as Truth is the reality of things, as they are, considered simply, and in their own Natures, or as they stand related to one another, as to Agreement or Disagreement; we must conceive, that in the Government of the World, he will not act contrary to the Natures and Relations of things.

As therefore (setting aside all other considerations) as we have already observed, (*p.* 425.) that there is a natural Relation of Agreement between Means and Ends, Effects and Causes, Faculties and Objects; so he must be conceiv'd to govern the World according to these natural Relations, so as that there shall be an Agreement maintain'd between them.

AND therefore as on the one hand we must conceive, that he will not bring about natural Ends by extraordinary, when ordinary Means will do; nor produce natural Effects by supernatural, when natural Causes will do; but on the contrary, will leave natural Causes to work according to their Natures, so far as they can serve his Ends: So on the other hand we must conceive, that the Relation between Faculties and their Objects shall be maintain'd; so that, as no object can be enjoy'd, but by the Means of a suitable Faculty, so every Faculty shall be provided with a suitable Object.

AND therefore for instance; as God in the Creation made various living Creatures, with natural Appetites, to preserve the *Individuum*, (as we say) by eating and drinking; and by consequence must have made a suitable provision, that there may be a sufficiency for the Supply of all: So we must conceive in the Government of the World, that there shall be always a like suitable provision continued, so as that nothing shall want any thing to its necessary Preservation.

AND as all living Creatures are likewise made with natural Appetites and Faculties, for the preservation of their Species; as it does hence follow, that as there must have been an equal number of Males and Females, of every Species made, that there might be an Object suitable to every Faculty; so we must conceive, that there shall be always an equal number of every Species continued:

AND (if we apply this particularly to Mankind) considering the state we are in at present; since the Males are expos'd to greater dangers than the Females, in the common and ordinary way of Life; and since vast numbers of them

them are destroy'd by War, by Sea, and other Accidents, by which there must arise a vast disproportion; from hence we must conclude, that in the Government of the World, there will be always a provision made for this; and by consequence that there shall be more Males born into the World than Females; and that too in such proportion as to answer this Defect, so as to preserve the equality of one to one; that as all are indued with a natural Faculty of multiplying their Kind, no Faculty should want a proper Object.

AND as we are thus to conceive of the Government of the World, in respect of natural Truth; so we must likewise, as to moral Truth: For as there are Relations of Agreement, and Disagreement of one thing to another, in Nature; so there are likewise instituted Relations of one thing to another in Society; and by consequence, as God is true, we must conceive, that if he shall think fit to condescend to treat with us in our own way, he will act suitably to these Relations.

AND therefore as there are certain known Signs, Words, and Actions, that are agreed upon by every Society to be the outward Expressions of our inward Thoughts; from hence we must conclude, that if God shall think fit to treat with Mankind, and for that purpose shall make use of any Sign, Word, or Action, either to express his own Will, or represent any other thing by; That Sign, Word, or Action is a true declaration of his Will, and a certain representation of the Thing; so as that his Will cannot be otherwise than they express, nor the thing really otherwise than they represent, according to their natural and usual meaning.

AND therefore whatever he delivers to be believed, is really as he delivers it; and whatever he expresses a desire of, he does really desire it.

IF he should prefigure any thing to come, or promise any thing to be done, or threaten any thing to be inflicted, or require any thing to be observ'd, or command any thing to be avoided; we must conceive, that he certainly knows the Thing prefigur'd shall come to pass, and as certainly designs the Thing promis'd shall be perform'd, the Judgment threaten'd shall be inflicted, the Duty injoin'd shall be observ'd, the Sin forbidden shall be avoided; and that too in such a manner as he expresses and represents it.

THIS must be so, if God be true, and we have right notions of his Truth.

Thirdly, As God is true, so is he good; and if this be another rule in the Government of the World, he must not only intend, but order every thing, so as shall be best for the happiness of his Creatures, according to their several Natures and Capacities; and whatever methods he uses for it, must be not only design'd, but suited to this End.

AND if so, then as I observ'd before, (p. 428.) since there are several Kinds of Creatures, all made for Happiness, some of which are not capable of Happiness themselves; it will follow, that if Happiness be the end of the divine operations relating to them, they must be so order'd as is best for the Happiness of others.

AND since there are other Creatures capable of some degrees of Happiness themselves, and yet are necessary to the Happiness of Man, it will follow, that though their Happiness shall be provided for in the Government of the World, it shall be only in such a manner, and degree, as is consistent with their Subordination to Man.

AND therefore though their Natures, as they are indued with such, and such Faculties, require that they be provided with suitable Objects; yet the manner, and measure of their enjoyment of them for their Happiness, must depend upon the reason and judgment of Man, how far it may be consistent with his Happiness; and if so, from hence it will follow,

THAT as we have before observ'd, (p. 424.) that all things were originally put in such a state, as was suitable to the end they were made for; so all things that are necessary to the Happiness of Man, were originally put in subjection to Man.

Burnett. And *lastly*, As the Happiness of Man does not only require a suitable Enjoyment, of suitable Objects, for the several Faculties both of Body and Mind; but likewise the Assistance of one another in Society; so we must conclude, that as he hath in the Creation, so he will in the Government of the World, take a suitable care for both; and not only provide for his Happiness in his private and personal, but also in his relative and social Capacity.

BUT as for the method of doing this, that will be best understood from the next consideration, by proper inferences from the Holiness of God. For,

Fourthly, As God is holy in his Nature, this must be also another rule of his Government; and as his Holiness is before shewn, (*p.* 417.) to consist in an immutable conformity of his Will, and operations to the dictates of his infallible Reason; and as the natural rule of Reason is the Natures and Reasons of things: So this must likewise be the rule of his operations, so as not to do any thing without Reason, tho' we do not know what that Reason is, or contrary to Reason; and therefore nothing but what the Natures and Reasons of things direct.

AND if so, then first we must conceive on the one hand, that God cannot will, or act any thing out of a mere arbitrary humour, merely because he will; but because 'tis most fit and reasonable: So that when we resolve things, as we commonly do, into the sole Will and good Pleasure of God, we must not understand them as acts of mere Will without Reason: But on the contrary we must conceive, that whatever he does, he had an infallible Reason for, otherwise he would not have done it, and whatever he wills had a natural goodness in it, in the order of conception antecedent to his will, otherwise he would not have will'd it:

AND therefore whatever he does, is not therefore reasonable because he does it; but he does it because 'tis reasonable and fit to be done. And whatever he commands to be done, is not therefore good, merely because he commands it, but he commands it, because it is in its own Nature good, either simply or relatively consider'd.

FOR tho' the thing commanded be in its own Nature indifferent, and have no intrinsic goodness in it; yet it may be good in order to an End; and so far as it is in its Nature fitted to that End, so far it is in its own Nature good, as a Means; and so far as the End is good, and fit to be pursu'd, and aim'd at, so far the Means are good, and fit to be commanded.

AND therefore as God cannot act without an End; and by consequence not command any thing, but as a Means to an End, nor any thing, but what is fitted for that End; so whenever he commands indifferent things, this must be the natural Reason of them, that they are naturally fitted to attain some End, which that command is intended for; tho' we may not be able always to find it out.

FOR tho' 'tis reasonable to suppose, that at the time when such commands are given, the End and Reason of them may easily be discover'd, from the relation they bear to the particular circumstances of the People, and the suitability there is between them; yet it does not thence follow, that it shall be always so, when the particular circumstances of the People are forgot, and the things, which the laws related to, are intirely unknown.

IT would therefore be very unreasonable in any one, to argue against the authority of antient laws, injoining indifferent things, merely because we are not able at this distance of time and place, to account for the particular reason, and thereby the natural fitness of them; when we are otherwise sure that they came from God, and therefore must have been appointed for some proper End and Reason, how much soever it may be hid from us.

Secondly, As God cannot act without Reason, so neither can he act contrary to Reason; and therefore not otherwise than as the Natures and Reasons of things direct:

AND if so, then first we must from hence conceive, that he will govern *Burnett.* all things according to their Natures and Reasons; natural things in a natural way, in and according to their natural Relations, so as to work natural Ends, ordinarily by natural Means, and produce natural Effects by natural Causes; and not to act without them, or against their Natures.

AND therefore tho' the goodness of God orders all things so, as shall be most for the Happiness of his Creatures, as has been shewn (p. 433.) yet so far as this Happiness depends upon the use of natural Means, or the operation of natural Causes, we must conceive that it cannot naturally be attain'd without them.

AND by consequence (if we apply this to ourselves) tho' Man in his rational capacity shall be provided as we have shewn (p. 428.) with all things necessary to his Happiness, in respect of the means of knowing, whatever is necessary to be known; as likewise in respect of a suitable power, with suitable rules and motives to do, whatever is necessary to be done: Yet, as it is necessary in the Nature of the thing, that those means of Knowledge, and those rules and motives of Practice should be consider'd, and that Power be put forth into Action, before any thing can be known or done; so we cannot expect any Happiness should arise from any provision of means, and rules, and motives, notwithstanding the goodness of the divine Government, unless we will consider and act accordingly.

AND so again *Secondly*, Tho' Man be furnished with all things necessary to his Happiness in his bodily Nature, in a due provision of proper objects, suited to its several Faculties; yet since the Happiness that arises from this provision depends upon ourselves, and since there is a necessity in the Nature of things, that our Faculties be exercis'd upon these objects, in a proper way; and that we apply ourselves to such means, as are proper for this End, or else we shall never be the happier for it;

So in the Government of the World we must expect no Happiness will arise to us from this, unless we will do accordingly: But on the contrary, as no effect can be produced without a suitable cause, and every natural cause will produce its natural effect; if Mankind do things contrary to their Happiness, they will be made unhappy by them.

AND so likewise *Thirdly*, As the Happiness of Man, consider'd as a rational Creature, must be a rational Happiness, and must consist not only in the use and enjoyment of such things, as are suited to his Faculties, but such an use and enjoyment as is suitable to Reason; so there can be no Happiness expected from them in the Government of the World, unless we will use and enjoy them accordingly: But on the contrary, we must not only expect such mischiefs to insue, as the Nature of things so abused will produce; but such also as will arise from their contrariety to Reason, in guilty reflections and reproaches of the Mind.

AND so again *Fourthly*, Tho' God provides all things, that may be for the Happiness of Society; yet since the natural dependance of Mankind upon one another is such, that, as they cannot be happy without one another, so they may be the occasion of one another's Misery, according as their actions are; it is impossible in the Nature of things, but the Happiness of Mankind must depend upon their actions: And if we are furnish'd by the goodness of God, with all things necessary to our doing, what our Happiness requires to be done; this is all that can be requir'd on God's part; and there can be no Happiness expected by us, unless we will do accordingly.

AND so *Secondly*, As God governs natural things in a natural way; so we must conceive, as was just now said, that he will govern rational agents in a rational way; that is, in such a way as is suitable to a rational Nature.

AND therefore, as Man is an understanding, and a free Creature, not only capable of apprehending the Natures and Reasons of things, how far they are fit to be chosen and done, but also has power of self-determination; if such a Creature be govern'd according to its Nature, it must be in such a way, as is suitable both to his understanding and freedom.

AND

Burnett. AND by consequence, as God governs Man for his Happiness, and for that End, as we have shewn, (p. 428.) will provide him with such Means, as are necessary to inform his Knowledge; and such rules and motives as are necessary to direct and incline his Will to practice; yet those Means must be such as his understanding can apprehend; and those rules must be such, as are possible and reasonable to be observed, and those motives likewise, such as may be sufficient to influence and incline his Will to observe them; and by consequence such, as shall make it more for his Happiness to observe, than not observe them.

AND then, as he is a free Agent, he must be left to his own determination to chuse, or refuse, as he sees fit, whether he will make use of those means, or regard those motives, or observe those Rules or not; and by consequence whether he will be happy in himself, or in Society.

AND according to the good, or ill use that Mankind are suppos'd to make of their Liberty, and according to the different Nature of their Actions; so must we form different notions of the divine Government.

AND therefore *First*, As every thing by acting according to its Nature, will attain the End it was made for, (p. 427, 429.) and by consequence Mankind, by acting according to their Reason, will not only attain their own private Happiness, but the Happiness of one another in Society:

So had all things continued in that state, in which they were made, and should we suppose Mankind always acting according to their Reason; in such case we could conceive no other Government necessary to the Happiness of the World, but this, *viz.*

To preserve all things in their proper Natures and Orders, and to enable them to exert their Faculties and Powers, according to their several Ends and Uses: And if so,

THEN, as there is the same reason for their Preservation as there was for their Creation, so long as they act according to their Natures; so we must in reason conclude, That till Mankind should act contrary to their Nature, or Reason, which we call Sin, they should not only be preserv'd; but preserv'd in that Nature, and that State in which they were created; and by consequence should not only be immortal and everlasting, but immortally and everlastingly perfect; and happy both in Body and Soul in this World, without expectation of any thing to come.

FROM whence it will follow, That the Unhappiness, Imperfection and Mortality of Mankind, as likewise the expectation of a future state must originally have risen from Sin.

THIS is the notion, and as far as I can see, the only notion we can form of the divine Government, whilst we consider Mankind as acting according to their Reason,

BUT if Mankind be consider'd as acting contrary to Reason, and therefore contrary to, not only their own Happiness, but it may be the Happiness of others; then as they act contrary to the end of their Creation, and by consequence the end of their Preservation; so it may be natural to conceive, that in such a case, such persons, so acting, should not be preserved:

AND if so, then as the Reason of their suppos'd destruction is their Sin, and by consequence as there would be a Reason for their destruction, so soon as they should sin: So we might conclude from hence, that Mankind must be liable to destruction upon the very first act of Sin.

BUT then again, on the other hand, it is to be observ'd, that as God made Mankind for such degrees of Happiness, as their Nature is capable of; so we may conclude, that as long as they are capable of Happiness, so long they are capable of Preservation.

AND since every one is capable of Happiness, that acts according to his Reason; it will follow, that though a Man has acted contrary to Reason once, he shall yet be capable of Preservation so far as it may be prevented for the future:

AND

AND if so, then whatsoever is necessary in the Nature of the thing to prevent the first sinners disobedience for the future, seems to be necessary to the Government of the World. *Burnett.*

BUT here it is further to be observed, that since Mankind were not only made for Happiness, consider'd simply, but in Society, it is reasonable to conceive, that in the Preservation of a Sinner, God would provide for the Happiness of Society:

AND therefore, tho' the Sinner is preserv'd, that he may act according to his Reason for the future, and by doing so, will not only contribute to his own private Happiness, but also the Happiness of the Society; yet as the very Preservation of the first Sinner, might tend to the making many others sin, and so tend to the Unhappiness of Society, by making them think God regardless of their Actions; there seems a necessity, that in the Preservation of the first Sinner, some further method should be taken, to prevent the ill consequences of that Preservation.

So that here are two things necessarily to be provided for upon the first act of Sin in the World; and what methods are most proper for these purposes, the infinite Wisdom of God knows best: But if we might be permitted to conjecture by our Reason, according to the Natures and Reasons of things, we might conclude,

First, THAT since God governs rational Creatures, in a rational way, the most rational method of bringing a Sinner off from disobedience, and of influencing his Will to act otherwise for the future, is, to convince his understanding that he is in the wrong, and to make him sensible, that he has done what in Reason, he ought not, and what it were better he had not done; that is, in one word, to bring him to Repentance.

NOW the least that we can think necessary for this purpose, is, to let the Sinner feel some ill effect of his Sin.

AND as for the method of convincing the World, that he is not regardless of the actions of Men, when they act contrary to Reason; the least that we can conceive necessary in this case, is, to shew some token of his displeasure at it, by inflicting some suitable punishment for it.

NOW That I call a suitable punishment, which is naturally proper to answer the end for which it was design'd, namely, to discourage others from following the Sinner's Example.

AND therefore from these considerations we must conceive, that tho' God should not destroy the first Sinner, upon the very first act of Sin; yet that he would punish him in such a Manner, as to convince the rest of Mankind, that he was not unconcerned at their actions, and that they should have no encouragement to tread in the Sinner's steps, or run into the like disobedience with him.

THIS is the first notion we can form of the divine Government of the World, consider'd properly as a thing distinct from preservation.

AND this, as it owes its original to Sin; so we must conceive it would cease with it.

AND therefore, could we suppose Mankind, after the first Sin, acting according to their Reason for the future, we can suppose no Reason for any other sort of Government for the future, but Preservation;

BECAUSE, as I said before, every thing has a Nature suited to its End, and by acting according to its Nature must attain its End, (p. 425.)

AND since 'tis evident, nothing has a natural power, of acting contrary to its Nature, as being all necessary agents, but Man; it will follow, that if Man shall act agreeably to his Reason, the End of all things will be naturally attain'd:

AND by consequence there can be no need of any other Government, than to let things act according to their Natures.

BUT then still, as Mankind, in the natural method of Government, must be naturally left to their own freedom, and notwithstanding all these divine

Burnett. methods for prevention, may yet act contrary to their Reason, and thereby may disturb the order of Nature, according to the Nature of their actions; so if they are suppos'd to have done thus after the first Sin, as there must thence arise new, and further occasion; so we must suppose new, and different methods and operations of Government, in such manner, and measure, as Mankind were capable of, and as God saw necessary for their Happiness, according to their different circumstances.

AND tho' whilst things act according to their Natures, we can see no reason why God should, and by consequence cannot reasonably conceive, that he would act contrary to the Natures of things: Yet, when things happen to be alter'd, and are fallen into a different or contrary state to that they were created in; then,

As there may be reasons for different, or contrary methods of Government; so

Fifthly, As God is absolutely free, he may act differently or contrarily, according to those different or contrary Reasons, (p. 416.) and by consequence may act differently from, or contrary to the Natures of things, according as he has Reason for it.

AND if so, then, tho' God governs natural things in a natural way, and a natural order, as being the most natural method to attain their End: Yet when things happen to be altered so, as that it shall best serve the Ends, for which they were made, to act contrary to their primitive Nature and Order; he may do it in such manner and measure, as he sees fit: He may either act without natural causes, or against them; he may suspend their powers, or over-rule them; and when he permits things to go on in a natural way, he may direct when, how, and in what proportion they shall exert their operations.

AND so likewise *Secondly*, Tho' he ordinarily governs rational Creatures in a rational way; yet when he sees fit, he can supernaturally inform, or infatuate their understandings; and he can determine their Wills, and either actuate or restrain their Passions, by such an irresistible influence, as to make them do that good they would not have done; and keep them from doing that evil they would have done: Whether God does this or not, in such an irresistible way, we cannot tell without a Revelation; but according to our principles we must conceive, that he may, according as he shall have reason for it.

AND so again *Thirdly*, Tho' God be dispos'd to do good to his Creatures, according to their several Natures and Capacities: Yet, when the Natures and Capacities that he gave them are alter'd, or when they act contrary to them, he may then alter his methods of doing good; and if they are not capable of receiving good one way, he may do it another: He may do it either by Kindness or Correction, by Prosperity or Adversity, by Pleasure or Pain, or whatever other methods of Government he sees fit; and that too in what manner, and measure, and season, his Wisdom shall direct for their good.

AND so *Lastly*, Tho' God be absolutely true, and can make no outward declaration but what is real; yet when the Reason of such declaration is alter'd, he may either revoke, or alter his declaration, or may act otherwise than he declared.

BUT then we must remember, that this freedom is both a wise and holy freedom; (p. 418.) and by consequence, as wisdom will do nothing in vain, and therefore nothing by extraordinary and supernatural, when ordinary and natural, means will do:

So holiness will do nothing contrary to the natures and reasons of things any farther, than as their natures and reasons are altered; nor any farther than that alteration does require it.

AND by consequence, so far as the wisdom of God shall see, that by acting according to the natures of things, the end of the Creation may be equally attain'd; so, tho' the natures of things are altered, so far we may reasonably conceive, he will not act contrary to their natures.

AND therefore *First*, we may conclude, that tho' he may act contrary to *Burnett*. the nature of natural causes and rational agents; and tho' he may suspend, or over-rule the powers of the former; and he may supernaturally inform, or infatuate the understandings, or actuate or restrain the wills of the latter: Yet he will never do it, but in such a case, where there is a necessity in the nature of things, and where the Happiness of the World cannot be attain'd without it.

AND so, tho' God may do good in what manner he sees fit, either by Kindness or Correction, by Pleasure or Pain; yet, as Pleasure is most agreeable to the natures of Mankind, so far as they are capable of Happiness by Pleasure, so far we must conceive, he will not give them Pain or Correction.

AND *lastly*, tho' God may revoke and alter his declarations, or, as he sees fit, may act contrary to them; yet it must be only so far as the natures and reasons of things are alter'd.

AND therefore when God promises a favour, or threatens or foretels a judgment upon a certain Reason; tho' God cannot be obliged, when that Reason is ceas'd, to perform his promise, or inflict the judgment;

AND tho', when God gives laws of a mutable Nature for mutable Reasons; when the Reasons of such laws are alter'd, he may alter his declarations concerning them; and may either command what he forbad, or forbid what he commanded:

YET so long as the Natures and Reasons of things are the same, so long we must conclude, his declarations and operations will be the same:

AND by consequence, when God commands any thing to be observed or avoided, or denounces or threatens any thing to be inflicted; the Reason of which is founded in the Nature of things, such laws and threatnings cannot be disannull'd, so long as the Nature of things continue; and we must conceive, that in such cases God will neither revoke nor act contrary to them.

THUS far then have we discover'd the Nature of God, both in his perfections in themselves, and the outward manifestation of them in acts of Creation and Government.

AND these being sufficiently demonstrated, I shall take these likewise for granted all along, and upon this Basis I shall proceed in my design; and by necessary and rational conclusions, shall endeavour to demonstrate the general Body of all Religion: So that whosoever shall allow (as I think no man can deny) the foregoing Reasonings, shall not with any shew of Reason reject any other part of Religion whatsoever.

BUT that we may do this more clearly and convincingly, it will be proper to look back a little, and reflect upon what we have before prov'd.

What is the true State of Nature.

AND the first thing that I think necessary to be called to mind, is, that the original state of Mankind is, as we have prov'd (*p.* 423.) a state of perfection.

C O R O L L A R Y.

FROM whence we may be able to form a right notion of a true and proper state of Nature; a point so much controverted amongst us.

FOR as it is self-evident, that that must be the true and proper Nature of things, which they receiv'd when they were made:

So by consequence, nothing can be properly said to be in a state of Nature, any farther than it can be said to be in a state of Perfection:

AND therefore, so far as Mankind are fallen from the Perfection, they were originally created in, so far they are in an unnatural and corrupted state.

AND if we will call this a state of Nature, it ought to be done under this distinction of a state of imperfect and corrupted Nature; in opposition to that, which was the true and primitive state of Nature, which was a state of Perfection and Purity.

AND

Burnett. AND this is so necessary a distinction, that without this we shall hardly be able to speak of this matter without confusion.

AND the want of this, as it has been a grand flaw in many treatises on Natural Religion; so it has been the foundation upon which those extravagant Tenets of the Leviathan were built; which when this necessary distinction is made, do, of themselves, all fall to the ground.

FOR since it does appear, that a state of corruption is not the natural state of Man, whatever inferences are drawn from this Hypothesis, that this is the natural state of Man, must by consequence necessarily be false.

What Mankind stood in need of in a State of pure Nature.

Secondly, AS we have shewn that Mankind were made in a state of Perfection and Purity:

So 'tis in the next place necessary to be observ'd, as we have already prov'd, that they were made by the Wisdom of God for some End, and by the Goodness of God for Happiness; and that they were put in such a state as was proper for the attainment of it, (p. 428.)

AND by consequence that they must be inform'd of this End and Happiness, and the means of attaining it; that is,

THAT they must be provided with the necessary means of knowledge of every thing necessary to be known, and furnish'd with sufficient Power, with suitable Rules and Motives to do whatever was necessary to be done. And if so, then

First, SINCE the End and Happiness of Man consists, as shall be shewn in being partaker of the divine Nature; from hence it will follow, that if there be a necessity, that Man should be inform'd of his End and Happiness; there is the same necessity that he should be inform'd of the Nature of God, in which his End and Happiness consists. And if so, then

Secondly, AS it is self-evident, that the reason of his being inform'd of his End and Happiness, and the means of attaining them, with the necessary Rules and Motives of Action, is, that those Motives should be complied with, and those Rules be followed, and those Means imploy'd in the attainment of this End and Happiness; from hence it will follow,

THAT so soon as Mankind were capable of understanding and enjoying Happiness; so soon as they were capable of considering those Motives, and observing those Rules, and using those Means; so soon must they have had this information given them: And if so, then

Thirdly, SINCE Mankind were created perfect in their Nature, and therefore naturally capable of all this, so soon as they were made; it will follow, that they must have had this information, so soon as they were made.

So that from all this put together, we are abundantly assur'd of the necessity of some means of information to be given to Mankind, so soon as they were made, of every thing necessary to be known concerning the End and Happiness for which they were made; the Nature of God, in which that Happiness consists; as likewise those Rules, or Means, and Motives of doing whatever is necessary to be done in order to the attainment of it. Thus far I think the argument is clear beyond any reasonable objection.

The Means of Knowledge in a State of pure Nature.

THE next thing now to be enquir'd into, is,

Secondly, WHAT Means of information those were, which Mankind had, so soon as they were made.

AS to this we must conceive, from the holiness of God, that as he always acts according to the Natures and Reasons of things;

So the means of information must be such, as the Nature of the things to be known, and the Reason of the knowledge of them requir'd:

AND by consequence, as those things, that are necessary, but cannot be *Burnett.* known, so far as to answer the End of knowing them in a natural way, do require a supernatural :

AND as those things, that can be known in a natural way, do require no more than natural means ;

So from hence we must conclude ; *First*, that if there was any thing necessary to be known, which our first Parents could not know by Reason, in a natural way ; so soon as their occasions did require the knowledge of it, it was certainly made known by a supernatural Revelation : But

The Rule of Reason.

Secondly, As for those things that lay within the compass of Reason, as they were to be known by the exercises of Reason, in the use of such natural means of knowledge, as were afforded for that purpose ;

So we must conclude, they had nothing more, no other revelation concerning them.

Now by the natural means of knowledge, I mean the Natures and Reasons of things :

FOR knowledge is the perception or apprehension of things as they are.

Now things may be consider'd, either as they are simply, and in their own particular Natures, or as they are related to each other, in respect of agreement or disagreement.

AND as those things, which we apprehend to agree or disagree, we therefore judge to be fit, or unfit for such, and such purposes :

So that fitness, or unfitness, for such, and such purposes, is a Reason, arising from the Nature of things for the fitness, or unfitness of such, and such operations.

AND when we make a right judgment of things, or, in other words, when the Natures and Reasons of things agree with our apprehension and judgment of them, and are as we apprehend and judge them to be ; as we are then said to know those things, and as our Reason is then said to be right :

So by consequence, if we would form a right knowledge of things, the natural Rules or Means to form our notions and judgment by, is, to consider the Natures and Reasons of them. And if so,

THEN as every thing had its Nature from God ; so whatever Means of information our Reason finds out by considering the several Natures which God has made things of, and the Relations he has placed them in ; this we may very properly call, the natural Revelation of God ; and the matter of such Revelation, natural Religion.

The Substance of Natural Religion.

SINCE then we have prov'd the necessity of Man's being inform'd, so soon as he was made,

First, OF the Nature of God, and his own Happiness.

Secondly, OF the Means and Rules to attain this Happiness by.

Thirdly, OF the Motives to enforce the Observation of those Means and Rules.

SINCE, I say, we have already prov'd this, as this must be the Substance of natural Religion, so far as it is discoverable by Reason ; so here it will be proper to inquire,

First, How far the knowledge of these several particulars is capable of being discover'd by Reason ; and so far as we find them to be so, so far we must conclude our first Parents had no other Revelation concerning them.

Secondly, WE will inquire, whether there was any thing further necessary to be known, which our first Parents, in a state of Purity, could not know by Reason, and therefore requir'd a supernatural Revelation.

Burnett. As to the *first* of these, how far the knowledge of God and our Happiness, the Means and Rules to attain this Happiness by, and the Motives to enforce those Means and Rules, are discoverable by Reason: It will be necessary for a clear apprehension of this matter, to examine distinctly every one of the fore-mention'd particulars, and consider each article by itself.

AND therefore we will take a view,

First, OF the Nature of God, how far it is discoverable by Reason. What Reason may find out concerning this, I have already consider'd at large; and all that I have hitherto said upon this head, has been the result of bare Reason.

IF there be any thing necessary to be added, it can be only to inquire; whether it can be reasonably suppos'd, that Man, at his Creation, could be capable of finding out all those speculations, that we have deliver'd concerning God.

IN answer to which, it may safely be affirmed, and we have already shewn it to be certain, that, if all this was necessary to be known, his Reason was either capable of finding it out, or else it was otherwise discover'd to him:

BUT that his Reason alone was sufficient for this purpose, I think, cannot reasonably be doubted; whilst we reflect upon what we have before prov'd, *viz.*

THAT he was made perfect in his Kind, and therefore perfect in his rational Faculties; and by consequence capable of knowing every thing by Reason, that Reason, in its perfection, is capable of knowing,

AND if so, then as it is self-evident, that Reason, in perfection, must necessarily be suppos'd capable of knowing more, and more clearly, than Reason in imperfection, Reason corrupted, cramp'd, and bias'd by false Prejudices, and ill Impressions:

So we must necessarily conclude, That whatever knowledge of God we are by Reason capable of attaining to; the same he must have had much clearer, and fuller; than we, in our state of imperfection, can pretend to:

AND by consequence, whatsoever we have shewn in the foregoing part of this Treatise, that we can discover by the bare Principles of Reason only, concerning the divine Nature and Operations; nay, I may say, whatever we shall hereafter shew to be discoverable by us, concerning any thing else, by mere rational Principles; so far as it was necessary for him to know it, so far at least we must conclude he knew it.

NAY further, from the perfection of his rational Faculties, I think, it will follow, that he must be capable of understanding every thing necessary, as perfectly, as we understand any thing.

NOW there are some things that ev'n we discover upon the first operation of the Mind, as nimbly as the eye perceives colours; and therefore, in that state of perfection he was in, where there were no false prejudices, nor ill impressions to warp his judgment, or obstruct his reasonings, he may very well be suppos'd to discover all necessary truths, as nimbly as we discover any; and be let into the knowledge of such things, as it were by intuition upon the first opening of the Mind.


BUT be this as it will, that he knew them is certain and undeniable, and that is sufficient for my purpose; and therefore from hence I will proceed in the next place to inquire, what notions Reason would furnish him withal concerning,

Secondly, THE true End and Happiness of Man;

BOTH these must be consider'd together, as being but two different expressions for the same thing;

FOR we have already shewn, that the End for which God made all things, was the good of his Creatures; (*p.* 427.) and by consequence, that which is the true Good, must be the true End of Man.

NOW the only good that God could aim at in the Creation, was himself: For since he is the Creator of the World, as he is therefore the sole fountain of being and perfection, and by consequence of all good; so before the Creation of the World, he was the only being, and therefore the only good; and by consequence

sequence the only end, and the only good, he could intend in the Creation, *Burnett.* must be himself. 

BUT yet, since he is a being absolutely perfect, as he could not want, and therefore could not aim at the receiving any good to himself: So it will follow, that it must be some good to be imparted to his Creatures; and by consequence, the good that he intended for Man in the Creation, was the imparting of himself, or the communication of his perfections to him:

AND if so, then, since Happiness is nothing else but the enjoyment of good, as God is the highest good, it must be the highest Happiness of Man to have the divine Nature communicated to him in the highest degree that he is capable of.

AND therefore if we would perfectly understand the true Happiness of Man, we must reflect a little upon what we have said concerning the Nature and Perfections of God; and how far they are communicable to Man.

NOW as to the Nature of God, we have shewn, that he is an independent, necessary, immutable, infinite, omnipresent, everlasting, spiritual Substance, or Being; endued with life, or the utmost degree of power and activity; with sense, or the utmost enjoyment of pleasure; with reason, or the utmost degree of knowledge, wisdom and holiness; it must therefore be the Happiness of Man to have this Nature communicated to him; and to be as like God in these perfections of substance, life, sense and reason, as his state and condition is capable of.

HERE then the only question is, what degrees of these perfections the state and condition of Man is capable of.

NOW as to the perfections of substance, such as independency, necessity, immutability, omnipresence, and infinity, these human Nature are not capable of; they are not communicable to a Creature, but can only belong, as we have shewn, (p. 406, 407.) to a self-existent being.

BUT to be spiritual and everlasting are not so, these may be imparted to a Creature; for it does not appear that it is any wise inconsistent for God to create an everlasting Spirit, or, in other words, a Creature, that is not matter, which shall last for ever.

AND as we may from thence infer, that we have, so we are generally suppos'd, upon very good reason, to have such a spiritual and everlasting Nature imparted to us; which is that principle that actuates and informs our bodies, which we call the human Soul. But whether this be so or not, is not of importance to this present argument.

SO likewise as for the perfections of life, sense, and reason, these are not only communicable to a creature, but we find by experience we have them all in some degree:

FOR as we have a principle of Reason, capable of knowledge, wisdom, and holiness:

SO we have a body endued with life and sense, that is, with Power and activity; with a faculty of perception and sensation of pleasure; which body is compos'd of such a number of parts, fram'd in such order, and proportion, as to be a fit instrument to these powers and faculties, in the exercise of their several operations.

IF then the Happiness of Man consists in being like God in these several perfections, we must form our conceptions of this Happiness of Man, according as we conceive of these perfections in God.

AND therefore, as we have shewn that the perfection of life in God, consists in doing all that is possible for him to will; and the perfection of sense, in enjoying all the pleasure that is possible for him to enjoy; and the perfection of Reason in the absolute comprehension of the Natures and Reasons of things, in respect both of knowledge and wisdom; and such an immutable holiness of will, as never to chuse or act any thing, but according to the Natures and Reasons of things:

So

Burnett. So the Happiness of Man must by consequence consist in the highest degree of these perfections, that his Nature is capable of.

AND therefore when Man, in respect of his rational Nature, knows the Natures and Reasons of things, as fully, and as clearly, as he is capable of knowing them; and his will is intirely govern'd by his Reason, so as never to chuse, or reject any thing, but according as his Reason apprehends the Natures and Reasons of things require:

AND when in respect of his bodily Nature, which was made to be an instrument of the Soul, in subjection to, and under the direction of Reason; he has his Faculties of operation perfect, and regularly imploy'd upon their proper objects; so as to do all those things, and those things only, which his Reason thinks fit to be done; and to enjoy all those pleasures, and those pleasures only, which his Reason judges fit to be enjoy'd; then he is in a true state of natural and perfect Happiness.

So that in one word, the chief Happiness of a rational Nature consists in right Reason and Holiness: For the clear knowledge, and the right apprehension and judgment of the Nature, and Reasons of things, we call right Reason; and the government of our wills, and other powers and faculties by right Reason, we call Holiness:

AND as right Reason and Holiness are the highest perfections of a reasonable Nature; and as we are most like God, when our Knowledge and Holiness are in the greatest perfection; so, when we speak of the Happiness of Man, sometimes as consisting in the perfection of his Nature, sometimes in right Reason and Holiness, and sometimes in the enjoyment of God, and being like God; it is to be observ'd, that these are all but different expressions, that naturally imply the same thing.

THE notion of our Happiness being thus explain'd, from hence we may be able to discover,

How Happiness is to be attain'd.

Thirdly, WHAT those means, or rules, or laws are, by which this Happiness is to be attain'd.

BY means, or rules, or laws, the same thing is to be meant: For whatsoever is a necessary means to an End; the same is a necessary rule to be observ'd in order to the attainment of that End: And whatsoever God has made necessary to be observed, as a rule, it is undoubtedly his will we should observe it; and whatsoever it is his will, we should observe as a Rule, that is certainly a law, by which we are to act.

AND therefore the means that are necessary to the attainment of this Happiness, may likewise be call'd the laws of our Happiness; the necessity of which being founded in the Natures of things, and thereby signified to be the will of him, who is the author of that Nature and Necessity; they are likewise call'd the laws of Nature.

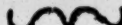
BUT then, as the means that are necessary to the Happiness of Mankind are different, as we shall shew hereafter, according as they are consider'd in a state of Purity, or Corruption, there being many things to be done in the latter state, which would have been needless and unknown in the former:

So in treating upon the laws of Nature, if we would speak without confusion, it will be proper to carry this distinction along with us:

AND as the state of Purity was the first state of Mankind; so those laws, that oblig'd in that first state, we call *primary* laws of Nature:

AND those, whose obligation arose from our Corruption, though they are founded in the Nature and Reason of things, as they are at present; yet this not being their primitive and original state, we will call them for distinction *secondary* laws.

To find out these laws has been the work of many learned pens, and a great deal of pains has been spent about it; and by the usual method of managing the question, one would think it were a point very abstruse and difficult;

whereas it is really, as I shall shew, of all things one of the most obvious *Burnett.*
and easy. 

FOR since 'tis plain, that these laws of Nature are nothing else, but the means that are necessary to our Happiness, in the very natures of things; there needs nothing more to the discovery of those laws, than to see what the nature of our Happiness requires, in order to the attainment of it.

OUR Happiness then we have already shewn to consist in our being like God in the perfection of Knowledge and Holiness; that is, in a right apprehension and judgment of the natures and reasons of things, which is call'd right Reason; and in being intirely govern'd, both in our will and operations, by right Reason.

THIS is the notion of our Happiness, and by this it will be an easy matter to discover, what are the natural and necessary means to this Happiness; and by consequence, what are the natural rules and laws, by which Man was to act in a state of Nature.

The Laws of Nature.

For *First*, IF Man cannot be happy without right reason, or a right apprehension and judgment of the natures and reasons of things, whatsoever is a necessary means to right Reason, must be a necessary means to Happiness; and by consequence, the first thing necessary to be done, in order to a right apprehension and judgment of things, must be the first law of nature, and that is

To consider the natures and reasons of things, how far they are fit to be chosen, or done, before we pretend to chuse or act. *General Law.*

Secondly, IF Man cannot be happy without Holiness, that is, without chusing and acting, according as his reason in the consideration of the natures and reasons of things, apprehends them worthy to be chosen, or done; then, as it is another necessary means to our Happiness, so it is another general law of nature.

NOT to chuse, or act any thing without, or contrary to reason, nor in any other manner, or measure, than reason judges fit, but to chuse, and act every thing, that reason directs; and in such manner, and degree, as reason apprehends the natures and reasons of things require. *Second General Law.*

THESE are the two general laws of Nature, and in these two, the whole body of natural law is comprehended, as we shall see by the following deductions: As for instance,

First, IF we must not chuse, or act without reason, since the reason that moves the agent to act is the very notion of an end; we are hereby oblig'd not to act without some end:

AND since that which reason approves, as proper and convenient to be chosen, or done, is the very notion of Good, and by consequence whatever reason proposes, as an end, must be some Good:

As we are here obliged not to act without an end; so we are by consequence obliged not to act without an intention of some Good, either to ourselves or others:

AND as the rule of Reason is the natures and reasons of things; so we are by consequence oblig'd to do nothing, but with an intention of such Good, as our Reason apprehends the natures and reasons of things require.

So that by this we are oblig'd to the general laws of Prudence and Goodness.

Secondly, IF we must not chuse or act contrary to reason, that is, to our conceptions and judgments of things, by this we are taught the great laws of Truth and Sincerity.

Thirdly, IF we must not chuse, or act, but according as our Reason apprehends the natures and reasons of things require; here we have the great laws of Moderation and Fortitude, by which our passions and operations are to be govern'd, in respect of the difference that there is in things:

AND therefore to apply this;

Burnett. *First,* As there are evidently many things made of the same Nature, and for the same End, which we therefore call Equals:

So it will follow, that we must behave ourselves towards them equally alike; because as they are of the same Nature, whatsoever is in respect of that Nature necessary, or fit to be done to any one, is equally necessary, or fit for every one:

AND by consequence, as all Mankind by being made for the same End, and of the same Nature, are so far naturally Equals; they must be so far esteem'd, and lov'd, and dealt with equally; and whatsoever Reason directs to be done to any one, in respect of his Nature, the same it must direct to be done to all.

AND therefore if our own Nature be worthy our esteem, and love; so likewise is the Nature of every other Man:

IF our Nature as such requires good offices from others; the same Nature in others requires the like good offices from us.

AND if by our Nature we have such relations to others, as require, that they be true, and just to us; the same relation in them to us, requires the same from us to them; and so likewise of all other things of this kind.

Secondly, As there are many other things, which, tho' they are made for the same End, are yet different in their Natures: As some, for instance, more perfect, than others in themselves, some more suitable to us, and more directly conducive to our Happiness, than others, which we call Good. By this general law we are not only oblig'd to prefer those things in our affections, and our operations, which our Reason prefers in its judgment; but also to do it in such proportion, as it judges them worthy to be preferr'd, according to the measure of that Perfection, or the degree of that Good, which it apprehends to be in them.

AND therefore as those things, that are perfecter, and better than others, are more worthy to be known, and consider'd, to be desir'd, and hoped for, to be lov'd, and delighted in than others:

So we are hereby oblig'd, not only to consider, and know, to desire, and hope for, to love, and delight in those things first, and above others; but also to do this, so far as they are worthy of it, according to the different degrees of their Perfection and Goodness.

AND by consequence, since reason tells us, that God is not only the most perfect Being in himself, and the highest Good and Happiness, we are capable of, but also, that he is an absolutely perfect Good; it will follow,

THAT we must not only endeavour to consider, and know, to desire, and hope for, to love, and delight in him first, and above all; but also, that we must consider him with all possible degrees of Consideration; and know him with all possible degrees of Knowledge; and love him with all possible degrees of Love; that is, with all our Heart, with all our Mind, and with all our Strength.

THUS we are taught how to regulate those passions, that we commonly call concupiscible, which virtue we usually distinguish by Moderation.

BY the same rule we are taught, how to manage those passions, which we commonly call irascible, such as Hatred and Fear, Grief and Anger: The regulation of which is commonly call'd Fortitude:

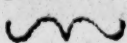
BUT these could have no place in a state of pure Nature:

FOR in that state we have shewn, that Mankind must have been intirely govern'd by their Reason, and the natures and reasons of things; and as they were in a state of Happiness, so they knew, that so long as they continu'd to act according to Reason, their Happiness should be continu'd to them, (p. 436.)

AND therefore in such a state, as there could be no manner of reason, or occasion for Hatred, or Fear, or Grief, or Anger:

So we must conclude, they arose from Sin.

AND by consequence, that our first Parents, in a state of Purity, could have no more notion of these passions, than we can have of such things, that we never saw, or heard of:

BUT when Sin came into the World, there was soon reason enough for them *Burnett.* all; and by this rule we are taught how to regulate them all, *viz.* 

THAT we hate, fear, grieve, or be angry, only according to the natures and reasons of things; that is, that these passions be directed towards their respective objects in such manner, and measure only, as our Reason, upon a due consideration, apprehends they are naturally worthy of our Hatred, or Fear, our Grief, or Anger. Thus we are taught to regulate our passions.

Fourthly, IF we must not chuse, or act any thing, but as Reason apprehends the natures and reasons of things require, here we have a general law of Justice and Equity, which will branch itself out into several different particulars, according to the different natures and reasons of things. And accordingly,

First, SINCE 'tis self-evident, that there are several sorts, or degrees of Beings; some mere Substances incapable of Happiness themselves, and therefore made for the Happiness of others; if we must act according to the natures and reasons of things, we are hereby obliged, in respect of such Beings, not to use them in any other measure, than is necessary to the end they were made for:

AND by consequence, so far as they appear to be intended for the Use and Happiness of Man, they must be us'd only in such a degree, as his Happiness requires their Use:

So that here we have a law against prodigality, and excess in the use of inanimate Creatures.

Secondly, AS 'tis evident there are other Beings indued with a principle of life, and sensation of Pleasure and Pain; which, tho' they appear to be made for the happiness of others, are yet capable of some degrees of happiness themselves; if we must not act contrary to the natures and reasons of such things, here is an absolute necessity, that they be not depriv'd of their lives or senses; or hinder'd in their natural pleasures; or put to pain, but with an eye to their end; nor any further, than is necessary to their end; which is the happiness of those others, they were made for.

So that here we have a law against all cruelty in the needless destruction of such Creatures, and the barbarous manner of doing it:

AND from hence we must conclude, that in a state of pure Nature, where Men were intirely govern'd by the natures and reasons of things, they never ate flesh, 'till there were no other things that were fit to be eaten; because the necessity of killing them for the happiness of Man, could be the only natural reason of doing it.

AND by consequence, that the first killing of beasts must have arisen from a sense of such a Necessity, or from Revelation.

Thirdly, ANOTHER order of Beings we find in ourselves, who being made for happiness according to our Nature, which is compos'd of two parts, a sensitive Body, and a rational Soul, each capable of a different happiness; if we must act according to the natures and reasons of things, we are hereby oblig'd to act according to the nature both of the Soul and Body: And therefore,

First, AS it is in the nature of the rational Soul; so it is the duty of every Man to consider, and chuse, and act according to his Reason: as was before observ'd.

AND as every one has a rational Soul of his own, it must be the natural duty of every one, not only to consider and chuse according to his nature, but also to consider and chuse for himself.

Secondly, AS the Body is compos'd of a certain number of parts, indued with a principle of life; since we must not act contrary to the nature of the Body, we are by consequence hereby oblig'd not to deprive ourselves, or any other person, of any part of the Body, much less to take away our own, or any other's life:

AND as the Body has likewise several powers and faculties suited to several objects and operations; so if we must act according to the nature of the Body, it is absolutely necessary to our happiness, and by consequence a natural law;

THAT

Burnett. **T H A T** we apply ourselves to such objects, and such operations, as our powers and faculties require.

B U T then as all the powers and faculties of human nature were made in a natural subjection to Reason; so they must not be gratified in any other manner, nor exercis'd upon any other object, or in any other measure, than Reason shall allow to be consistent with the natures and reasons of things; that is, with the nature of those several faculties; and the reason of the exercise and gratification of them.

A N D therefore, as we have several faculties, so we are hereby directed to several duties according to the several natures and reasons of them. And accordingly,

First, As we have some natural faculties, that we call appetites, which naturally tend to eating and drinking, tho' our happiness requires, that these appetites be gratified, yet it must be only so far, as is consistent with Reason; by which we are oblig'd not to eat or drink any thing but what our Reason approves, as fit to be eaten or drank, nor in any other measure, than the reason of eating and drinking requires.

A N D therefore, as the natural reason of eating, or drinking, is hunger and thirst; so in a state of pure Nature Men were naturally oblig'd not to eat or drink longer, than 'till their natural hunger and thirst should be allay'd:

T H E same likewise will hold as to all other faculties, and all other things, that human nature could stand in need of.

F O R as the natural reason of desiring and enjoying such things as they needed, was their need of them; so they ought not to desire or enjoy them any further, or any longer than they needed them:

So that here we have a general rule of Temperance.

A N D so likewise,

Secondly, As we have several faculties fitted for, and such as cannot be exercis'd, but in Society; and as there are many things that our faculties require, which cannot be had but in Society:

So we are hereby oblig'd, not only to enter into such Society, as our faculties require; but also to exercise those faculties in such operations, as the natures and reason of things require.

So that here we have the great law of Humanity. And this may likewise be divided into as many particular duties, as we have natural faculties, and necessities, relating to Society.

N O W then, those natural faculties, and necessities, upon which the necessity of Society is founded, are three;

T H E faculty of Speech, of multiplying our Species, and the helplessness of our Nature without the assistance of some other:

A N D as these things made Society always necessary to the happiness of Mankind, that they might have objects suitable to their faculties, and assistance suitable to their necessities:

So it was always equally necessary to the happiness of Society, that these faculties should be exercis'd on their proper objects; and such assistance afforded as those necessities require.

So that Conversation, Multiplication, and mutual Assistance, were duties that came in with our very Nature:

B U T then, as all our faculties and operations were originally put in subjection to Reason, (*p.* 423.) and by consequence were to be regulated by Reason, according to the natures and reasons of things, here we are directed to a general rule for the due regulation of these duties.

A N D therefore first, as our conversation must be regulated according to the natures and reasons of things:

So it will follow, that it must be not only agreeable to the nature and reason, or end of Speech, and by consequence such as shall truly express our thoughts to one another; but also such as is agreeable to the nature of such things as we have to speak on, so as to talk with one another of those things most,

most, that are most worthy in themselves, and most conducive to our happiness to be spoken of; Burnett.

AND by consequence, that our discourses be chiefly upon God, and such things as relate to him.

THIS was the Rule, and this was the Practice undoubtedly in a state of Purity.

Secondly, As to the duties relating to Multiplication, if our faculties must be regulated according to the natures and reasons of things, it will follow,

First, THAT our natural powers of Multiplication, must not be us'd in any other manner, nor upon any other object, than is suitable to the nature of Man, by which all bestial familiarity is forbid.

Secondly, THAT they must not be used, but for the reason, or end of those powers, or faculties, viz. Multiplication.

AND by consequence no longer, than till reason apprehends this end is attain'd by a conception: By which, as all acts of Sodomy, or other uncleanness, that do not tend to Multiplication; so also excess of carnal familiarity is forbid.

AND if so, from hence we may conclude,

THAT in a state of Purity, as every thing had a nature suited to its end, (p. 424.) so our first Parents had no other appetites one to another in this kind, but what were agreeable to these Laws.

AND by consequence, that had they continued in that state, there must have been some certain times and seasons, for carnal familiarity amongst Mankind then, as we see in other Creatures now.

Thirdly, As the faculties of Multiplication ought not to be used, but for the end, for which they were design'd, viz. Multiplication; so by the same reason, it will follow,

THAT Multiplication ought not to be endeavour'd, but for the attainment of the end of Multiplication:

AND by consequence, since 'tis evident, (p. 429.) that the end of Multiplication is the happiness of Society, it ought not to be endeavour'd in any other way, than the happiness of Society will allow:

AND if so; then from hence we may conclude,

THAT since every thing was, as we have shewn, (p. 424.) not only made of such a nature, but put in such a state, as was best, for the end it was made for; and by consequence, since Mankind were, not only made with faculties of Multiplication, for the happiness of Society; but also were provided with such objects, as were most suitable to the nature and end of those Faculties, it will follow,

THAT whatever provision was made for Multiplication in the first beginning of the World, the same must be the best way for the happiness of the World; and therefore, if it can be made appear, that at first there was but one Man and Woman made, appropriated to each other in that way of Marriage, this must necessarily be best for the happiness of the World:

[AND 'tis very observable, to those that believe the holy Scripture, that in the case of Divorces, when the question was put to be decided by our Saviour, whether they were lawful, or not; he draws his argument against it from this very consideration, that from the beginning it was not so.] But this by the by.

Lastly, As to the third duty, which is necessary to the happiness of Society, viz. mutual assistance; if this must be regulated by the natures and reasons of things, it will follow,

THAT it must be not only such, as is agreeable to the nature of Man, and the nature of those necessities, which are the end, and reason of such assistance; but also must be given in such manner, and degree, as is most for the happiness of those that need it.

THESE are the general laws of Society, which are commonly call'd the laws of Humanity; and these, as I said, are such as came in with our very Natures; and such therefore I call *primary* laws of Nature:

Burnett. BUT there are other things equally necessary to the support, and happiness of Society, besides these, which came in only with what we call the Fall; and which, tho' we are obliged to observe, and submit to, yet the obligation arises only from the corruption of our Nature:

SUCH, for instance, as the determination of property, and the settlement of coercive government, and all those means, and laws, which are absolutely necessary to the security and support of property, and government.

AND tho' these are all truly laws of Nature, as being absolutely necessary, in the nature of things, to the happiness of Mankind, considering the state they are now fallen into; yet, as this was not the first state of Mankind, so I call these, as I said before, *secondary* laws of Nature.

AND as they would not have been laws, had not Mankind fallen into such a state by Sin, as to make them necessary to their happiness; so neither by consequence were there any such laws, even after they fell into Sin, 'till they had sinn'd in such a manner, and to such a degree, as to make them, in the nature of things, necessary. For 'tis, we see, the necessity of them to our happiness, that makes them obligatory; or in other words, that makes them laws founded in nature, or natural laws.

AND therefore, so soon as we can reasonably suppose, so pure and perfect a Creature, as Man was in his primitive state, could be capable of sinning to such a degree as to make inclosure, or property, and the settlement of coercive government, necessary to the happiness of Society; so soon, and no sooner must we begin the date of their original.

THIS I take to be clear beyond dispute, supposing it true, that property and government were occasion'd by the Fall: Now that they were so, I think will be equally evident, if we reflect upon the following considerations.

As *first*, for Property.

BY this is meant some peculiar right, that one, or more persons have to any thing, whereby they claim it, as their own, exclusive of all other's pretences to it. And,

BY Right is meant a power, or privilege of having, or enjoying any thing granted by a law:

THIS is the definition allow'd, even by Mr. *Hobbs*.

AND therefore according to this, as it is certain, that, where there is no law, there can be no right, and by consequence no property; so by the same reason, if there were any such thing, as natural property, there must be some natural law, which gives the person the privilege of enjoying the thing he has a property in, exclusive of any other's pretences to it:

BUT this cannot be, as we have shewn. For by the laws of Nature we see, (*p.* 429.) that no man hath, in a state of purity, any natural right to any thing he wants, any further, or any longer, than he wants it:

AND as 'tis self-evident, that all Mankind were originally made of the same nature, and therefore liable to the same natural wants; so by consequence they must be all made with the same natural right to every thing they wanted; and therefore could not justly exclude one another from enjoying any thing they had, so soon as their own natural wants were supplied:

AND therefore in a pure state of Nature 'tis demonstratively evident, that there could be no such thing, as property.

THE same likewise will appear concerning coercive government, if we consider, what we have already prov'd, namely,

THAT the state of Man's innocence was a state of perfection, wherein, as reason was to be his guide; so all his powers and faculties, his rational will and bodily operations were entirely subject to its directions, (*p.* 423.)

So that whatever reason should require to be done, or avoided, whilst he continued in this state; every one must naturally have observ'd of his own voluntary motion; and no sooner would the understanding have approv'd any thing, as necessary, but his will would have prompted him to action.

THIS was the true state of Man's innocence, (p. 423, &c.) and in such a state, as this is, all other government would be absolutely useless, but that in our own bosoms: *Burnett.*

AND as there could be no need of any other laws, than those, our reason would direct us to, in such things as are knowable by reason; so there can be no reason to think, there would have been any other laws but these.

IF there were, it must be either from God, or from Man: The former cannot be suppos'd, unless the wisdom of God can be thought to do any thing in vain, doing that by extraordinary, which may be done as well by ordinary means:

NEITHER can it be the latter, unless the reason of Man, which was then intirely govern'd by the natures and reasons of things, can be suppos'd to direct them to the making of such laws, as in the nature of things, there was no need of; and therefore could be no reason for.

THUS much I thought it proper to observe in this place concerning that nice, and so much controverted point, (Government) in which it is very necessary to know its true original; that we may be able to distinguish, what is to be meant by the laws of Nature, so often talkt of on that subject, whether those of pure, or corrupted nature; the different consideration of which, will give a quite different turn to that dispute*.

THUS we see, what laws we are directed to, by the consideration of the natures of the several orders of Beings, that we observe in the World thus far:

BUT *fourthly*, there is another Being above all these, that we have now consider'd, who is absolutely perfect, in whom our Happiness consists, and upon whom we, and all other things depend, as the Creator, and Governour of all, which Being, we call God:

AND if we are to act according to the natures and reasons of things; and by consequence must behave ourselves, in respect of God, in such a manner as is agreeable to the nature of his perfections, and our dependance upon him; here we have a new scene of laws open'd to us, which we call the duties towards God. And therefore,

First, As God is absolutely perfect, we have already shewn, (p. 446.) that it is a natural duty, to contemplate, and know the nature of God, and to love and delight in him; and that to the utmost degree that we are capable of: And

Secondly, As our happiness consists in being like God, and by consequence, the more like God we are, the more happy we must be; so it will follow,

THAT if we would attain that happiness we were made for, we ought to endeavour to be, as like God as our nature is capable of being; and by consequence to imitate him in all, that he is capable of being imitated in, 'till we are perfect, as he is perfect; not wanting in any degree of Knowledge, Wisdom or Holiness, that our nature is capable of.

AND if so, then since holiness consists, (p. 417.) in a conformity, not only of our wills, but our actions to reason; from hence it will follow,

Thirdly, THAT as it is our duty to know and love God, so our actions must be such, as our reason apprehends are suitable to our knowledge of him; or in other words, suitable to the notions we have of him; and suitable to that esteem, and respect, which is necessarily implied in the very nature of loving and delighting in him:

Fourthly, As God is a Being, upon whom we intirely depend; and to whose will we are, in our nature, absolutely subject, in respect of our whole Beings, Souls and Bodies, and all the powers, and faculties of 'em:

So if we would act according to the natures of things, we must act suitably to this subjection; and by consequence must, in all respects, be obedient to His will, whensoever, or howsoever made known to us. And

Fifthly, As the natural reason of this moral obedience to his will, is, that we are naturally subject to his will; so if we will act according to the reasons of things, it must be our duty, not only to act according to his will, but the reason of doing it must be a sense of our subjection to him:

* See *An Essay upon Government, and the natural Notions of it demonstrated.* By Dr. P.

Burnett.

AND if so, then, *Sixthly*, SINCE it was the will of God to make us, that we might be happy, not only in ourselves, but in one another, it must be his will, and our duty, not only to employ all the powers and faculties of the Body and Soul, in doing those things, that are necessary to the happiness of ourselves and others; but also to do it out of a sense of our duty, and out of obedience to his will.

THESE are the duties that Mankind were obliged to, even in a state of Purity:

BUT as for those duties to God, that arise from a sense of want or weakness, danger or affliction, and the like; these came in only with the fall, or depravation of our Nature.

FOR in a state of Purity, as Mankind were perfect in their Natures, and therefore without weakness:

So they were provided with every thing necessary to their happiness, with suitable powers and faculties to enjoy them, and therefore without want:

AND as they were sure, so long as they acted according to their natures, of the continuance of this perfection and happiness to them, (p. 423.)

So they could have no manner of reason to fear, either danger or affliction:

AND by consequence, they could be under no natural obligation to any such duties, the reason of which is founded only upon these, and such like natural occasions.

AND therefore however harshly it may sound, yet it is certain, from what we have before prov'd, that such duties, as Prayer, which betokens want, and Patience, which implies Suffering and Affliction, were not duties belonging to a state of Purity; but these, as well as a long train of others, had their rise from the corruption of Mankind, which introduced a croud of wants, and afflictions amongst us.

AND tho' they are, as we said before in another case, (p. 423.) properly laws of Nature, as being founded in the nature of things, and necessary means to the happiness of Mankind, as they are at present; yet they must be reckon'd under that order, which we have distinguished by *secondary* laws; as being such as we should not have been oblig'd to in the first state of Mankind; which as it was a state of perfection, seems capable of no other outward act of devotion towards God but Praise.

THUS have I given you a general draught of the laws of Nature, which Mankind were to be govern'd by in a state of Purity; the obligation to which is founded, we see, in the natures and reasons of things, as they are the necessary means to that happiness we were originally made for; in respect of which, as they are sometimes call'd the laws of nature; so they may as well be call'd, as they likewise usually are, the laws of reason: And that too, not only, as they are founded in the natures and reasons of things, but also as they are the natural dictates and inferences of reason, from the consideration of the nature of things.

THESE things being thus clear'd, and set in order, we have a perfect view of the foundations of the civil law, and may be able, from hence, to fix the just bounds of natural Right, and Wrong. For,

BY Right is meant by every one, ev'n by Mr. *Hobbes* himself, a Power or Privilege of acting, or enjoying any thing granted by a law:

AND therefore whatsoever the laws of Nature oblige Men to act, or enjoy, in order to their happiness, the same do they, by consequence, give them a natural right to act, and enjoy.

AND therefore, as by the knowledge of the several laws, and obligations of Nature, we must, at the same time, so far understand the rights of Nature; so by acting contrary to those natural laws, and obligations, as we shall act contrary to natural Right, and therefore must necessarily do wrong; so this Wrong must be differently aggravated, according to the nature of those laws, and the different degrees of our obligations.

AND if so, from all this put together we abundantly see the absurdity of those *Burnett.*
Men, who shall maintain any of these following positions, *viz.*

THAT there are no laws in a state of Nature:

THAT the obligation to moral Duties is wholly owing to the Scriptures:

THAT the rules Mankind had to walk by before the Scriptures, were alterable at the will of the civil Sovereign:

THAT whatsoever one Man doth to another, is no injury in such a state:

THAT this state is a state of War, and that all mutual compacts of Fidelity are void in it.

THESE are all tenets professedly maintain'd by Mr. *Hobbs*, and I think, 'tis sufficiently evident, nothing can be more false, if the foregoing reasonings be true;

FOR, to sum up all in one word, if that, by which God signifies his will to us, is a law; and if the nature and end of every thing be a signification of God's will, as to that thing; then, we have shewn, there are laws of Nature. And,

IF the natures and ends of things were determin'd before the Scriptures were reveal'd; then the obligation to moral duties does not depend upon the Scriptures: And if the natures and ends of things be not alterable at the will of the civil Sovereign; so neither can the laws of Nature be; that is, unless the civil Sovereign can cause, that happiness shall not be the end of our Creation; and that such, and such actions shall not be the necessary means to our happiness; he cannot alter the rules that Men are naturally obliged to walk by. And,

IF what God has made necessary to our happiness be a Good to us, and the contrary an Evil; then 'tis abundantly plain, that there are many things good and evil. And,

IF what God has made necessary to our happiness, we have a right to; and to deprive any one of his right be to do wrong; then every Man is capable of injury in a state of Nature, so far as he is capable of being depriv'd of any thing necessary to his happiness. And,

IF we are oblig'd, in a state of Nature, to Love and Goodness, Justice and Truth; then a state of Nature cannot be a state of War; nor can mutual compacts of fidelity be void in it, unless War and Hostility be reconcileable with Love and good Works, and Unfaithfulness be consistent with Justice and Truth.

THUS we see from the foregoing reasonings the falshood of these, and such like assertions as these; and thus much shall suffice for the laws of Nature.

WE come now to consider the next thing to be inquir'd into, *viz.*

Motives to enforce the Laws of Nature.

Lastly, THE motives, by which the observation of these laws were enforced.

NOW, that there were such motives annex'd to these laws, is as evident, as the laws themselves:

FOR since it does appear, that Mankind were made for everlasting happiness, (*p. 436.*) and that these laws are nothing, but the necessary means for the attainment of that happiness, with which we must necessarily, and without which we cannot possibly be happy; then here is a suitable motive annex'd to these laws, to enforce the observation of them. For,

THAT I call a suitable motive, which is in its nature sufficient to incline a reasonable will to chuse one thing rather than another; and as the object of a reasonable choice is good; so that only can be sufficient to incline a reasonable will to chuse obedience, which makes it more for our interest to obey, than disobey.

NOW such a motive, 'tis evident, we have in this case.

FOR to be happy everlastingly, as it is the utmost end; so we find by experience, 'tis the utmost desire of all Mankind; and to be excluded from happiness, as it is contrary to the end; so 'tis contrary to the desire of all Mankind.

AND therefore, since we are assur'd upon certain principles, that we shall attain this happiness, by the observation of these laws, and shall never attain it by the contrary; our reason must necessarily be convinced, that it is more for

Burnett. our interest to obey, than disobey them; as it is more for our interest to be happy than otherwise.

AND by consequence, here is a sufficient motive to enforce the observation of these laws, without any other consideration whatsoever.

BUT if we add to this, what we have already urg'd, and if it be allow'd, as it has been sufficiently prov'd, (*p.* 437.) that a sinner should, upon the first transgression, either be destroy'd; or if not, must undergo such methods of providence, as are not only proper to bring him to Repentance, but also to affrighten others from following his example; then here was a farther motive to Obedience.

FOR if Mankind, in a state of Purity, had this notion of the event of Sin, as they necessarily must; it being already prov'd, that they could by the Perfection of their faculties discover, at least as much, as we, in our state of Imperfection can attain to the knowledge of; then here was a most powerful consideration to incline 'em to their duty, when they knew, that they could never be happy without it; but on the contrary must, on the very first transgression, be either totally destroy'd; or if not, were sure to feel some such ill effect of their disobedience, as should be sufficient to convince them of their folly; and be punish'd in such a manner, as to make them an Example of terror, and discouragement to others.

THUS have I dispatch'd the several particulars, I propos'd to enquire into, and have shewn how far the nature of God, and the happiness of Man, the means, or rules, and laws by which Mankind were to act in order to this happiness, and the motives to enforce those rules and laws, were naturally discoverable by Reason.

THESE are the main body of natural Religion; and so far as it appears they are discoverable by Reason, so far we must conclude, that our first Parents, in a state of pure Nature, had no other Revelation concerning them.

WE come *secondly*, to enquire, whether there was any thing further necessary to be known in a state of Purity, which our first Parents could not know by Reason; and therefore requir'd a supernatural Revelation.

Several Revelations necessary in a State of Purity.

Now there were three things of this kind, which requir'd a Revelation: One relating to Man in his personal, the other two in his social Capacity; the former concerning Food, the two latter concerning Marriage, and Language.

As to the former, it is to be remember'd, as we have already prov'd, that 'tis absolutely necessary to the happiness of Man, that he have objects suited to his faculties.

AND by consequence, as he has such faculties, which we call appetites, which encline him to the operations of eating and drinking, it is absolutely necessary, that there be provision made of such things, as are necessary to be eaten, and drunk. This we have already prov'd above; but then, as the Body was made subject to the Mind; (*p.* 429, 430.) so we have likewise prov'd, that tho' 'tis necessary to his happiness, that these appetites be gratified; yet it must be only so far, as is consistent with Reason; by which he is oblig'd not to eat, or drink any thing, but what reason does approve, as convenient, and proper to be eaten, and drunk. This we have likewise already prov'd; (*p.* 448.) but this, as we will shew, could not be known by Reason, at the first formation of Mankind; and therefore requir'd a higher Revelation.

A Revelation necessary in a State of Purity, concerning Food.

INDEED as for drinking, since there was a necessity of a supply of that kind, and taking it for granted, that there was nothing made, that was capable of being drunk, and by consequence nothing, that the appetite could desire to drink, but water; it needs no great strength of Reason to infer, that, as that must necessarily be the thing design'd, so it must be convenient, and proper to be drunk:

AND therefore there could be no need of a Revelation, as to that.

BUT in the case of Food, 'tis evident, there was a great variety of things, *Burnett.* which, as they were capable of being eaten, the appetite might indifferently be inclin'd to eat; and tho' it was certain, something must be eaten, yet Reason could not possibly judge according to the natures of things, so soon as it was necessary for Man to know it, whether all these things were good for Food, or not.

FOR tho' Reason might conclude in general, that whatever God made was good in some respect, or other, or for some Creature, or other; yet it could not be thence rationally inferr'd, that it was good for Food, or good for Man; neither is it conceivable how such a thing is discoverable in a natural way, without long observation, and experience.

FOR whether a thing be naturally good, or bad for Food, can be known only by its agreement, or disagreement with the Body; and to find out this by Reason, we must first know the several parts, and properties, and operations of 'em both apart; and then what effects they will have on each other, when united.

BUT in what possible method can we conceive this to be discoverable by bare Reason? From what principle can we guess the most perfect, and acute understanding could penetrate into the natures of all things about him; as likewise into the nature of his own body, with all the ends and uses of every part, with all their several motions and dispositions, their powers and properties; and that too in so short a time, as nature can be suppos'd to subsist without Food?

AND yet, as I said, Man was oblig'd not to eat any thing, 'till his Reason was satisfied 'twas fit to be eaten; that is, 'till he could know all this; because without knowing this, he could not be rationally satisfied, whether it was fit to be eaten or not:

AND if so,

FROM hence we must conclude, that either Man, who was made perfectly rational, and whose happiness consists in acting according to right Reason, was put under a necessity of acting irrationally, by being forc'd to chuse his Food without knowing whether 'twas fit to be chosen, or not; which is abundantly shewn to be contrary to the wisdom, truth, and goodness of God;

OR else that there must have been some extraordinary Revelation to direct him in the choice of proper Food.

BUT then again, it might be argu'd on the other hand, that since he found in himself such natural appetites, as requir'd a suitable supply of Food, he might thence conclude, that whatever those natural appetites carried him to, must be naturally proper to be enjoy'd.

AND tho' he could not certainly find out by Reason, merely from the nature of the things themselves, what was fit to be eaten, and what was not; yet since there was a necessity of eating something, if there was any thing bad and unfit to be eaten, his happiness requir'd some information, or Revelation of it.

FOR otherwise he, who was made for happiness, was put under a necessity of doing that, which might be contrary to his happiness, by being under a necessity of eating that, which, for ought he knew, was dangerous to be eaten.

AND therefore, if there was no such Revelation given, Reason would naturally thence conclude, that what was not prohibited was necessarily allow'd; and that then Man might lawfully, and safely eat of every thing, his appetites inclin'd him to.

AND by consequence, tho' according to our former argument, we infer'd a necessity of some Revelation to direct our first Parents in the choice of proper Food; yet according to this latter way of arguing, there seems to be no such Revelation necessary, unless there was something made that was bad for Food, and some way or other dangerous to be eaten.

AND if so, from hence we must conclude, that either there was no Revelation at all given to our Parents concerning what they should eat:

OR if there was, there was something bad for Food, something that was dangerous to be eaten.

Now

Burnett. Now whether there was any such Revelation, or not, is matter of fact only, and cannot be known, unless it be by history, or tradition. And therefore,

IF any such history, or tradition should be found, that gives us any account of this matter, so far as it agrees with the foregoing reasonings, so far we must in reason conclude it true.

NOW such a history we have in the first book of *Moses*, when he has no sooner told us of the Creation of Man, but he presently informs us of a Revelation, and that not concerning religious principles, or moral duties.

AS for any thing relating to God, or ourselves, there is nothing said; and I take it to be a particular mark of the credibility of this history, that there is nothing said of these things:

FOR that any thing should be said of 'em, is not, we see, necessary in the nature of the thing.

BUT as natural means were, as we have shewn, sufficient, and by consequence, as our first Parents could need nothing more; so 'tis very probable, that whilst they continued in their Purity, they had nothing more, but were left to the improvement of those natural means, which were the natures and reasons of things.

BUT as it was absolutely necessary, that they should be inform'd concerning their Food; at least, if there was any thing dangerous to be eaten; so here we are told of such a Revelation.

AND as Man is represented, as plac'd upon his Creation in a garden, the fruits of which were to be his Food; so God is represented, as giving him directions, of which of those fruits he might safely eat, *viz.*

THAT he might eat of every tree, excepting one, which he was order'd to avoid, as he valu'd his life; because in the day, that he should eat thereof, he should surely die, or should be sure to die.

THIS is the account that *Moses* gives us; and this account being exactly agreeable to those foregoing reasonings, which appear to be undoubtedly true; as we must so far conclude this history to be true; so we may likewise conclude, that the fruit forbidden in this history, was therefore forbidden, because it was bad for Food, and in its Nature dangerous to be eaten.

NOW what a different idea does this account of the first state of Mankind give us, consider'd in the view, that I have here set it, from that which is commonly conceiv'd of it? What an odd notion must a Sceptick, or an Infidel have of the history of *Moses*; when he considers it as pretending to be a divine book? And yet in the very entrance of it, where he reads an account of the Creation of the first Parents of Mankind, just come out of their Maker's hands, and receiving instructions for their behaviour; when one would naturally expect to find a general transcript of the divine Will, as a rule for their future lives; there is not the least hint of any moral duty, but only a command about eating of an Apple, it may be, or some such paltry fruit; and yet the whole fate of the World is made to depend on this? What an odd notion must such Men have of this history, when they consider it in this view? But when we consider the first state of Mankind in the light, that I have here represented it from the natures and reasons of things; and when we consider how thoroughly furnish'd our first Parents were with the knowledge of every thing necessary to be known, that was naturally knowable by Reason; and therefore that all further Revelation was needless; and by consequence, in reason, not to be expected: And when we consider the fruit here forbidden, not forbidden merely as an act of God's arbitrary Will, but out of mere goodness to Mankind; and that the fate of Mankind did not depend on this any otherwise, than as in the nature of the thing it would be fatal to them; here is nothing in all this, but what is agreeable to the Nature of God, and suitable to the reason and understanding of Man.

*A second
Revelation
necessary in
a State of
Purity con-
cerning
Marriage.*

Secondly, ANOTHER thing there was, necessary to be known by Man in a state of Purity, which related to his social Capacity; and that was concerning

the

the Multiplication of his Species; which as it could not be known by natural Reason, requir'd a supernatural Revelation. *Burnett.*

FOR the proof of which, we may observe, what has been already urg'd, (*p. 427.*) that as Mankind have faculties, by which they are capable of increasing their Species; so they ought to have objects suited to those faculties, and by consequence, as they must be naturally made for Society, so it must be such Society as those faculties require. And as we have shewn that the end, and reason of these faculties is the increase of the Species, and the end of such increase the happiness of Society; (*p. 449.*) so we have likewise shewn, that those faculties ought to be us'd no longer, than 'till the end, *viz.* Generation is attain'd; nor in any other way, than as Reason apprehends is best for the happiness of Society, (*p. 449.*)

NOW there are but two ways possible for the Multiplication of Mankind, *viz.* either by such an appropriation of persons to persons, as we call Marriage:

OR else by an undetermin'd liberty of all to all.

AND therefore, if either of these ways would be prejudicial to Society, or one more for its happiness than the other, it is necessary Mankind should be inform'd of it.

AND whether Reason is capable of discovering this, is the question.

NOW for a light into this matter, it would not be improper to enquire, according to the principles of Reason, what number of persons might originally be created for the first increase of Mankind.

IN order to which it may be observ'd, according to what we have already prov'd, (*p. 423.*) that whatever number was made, be it greater or less, they were all made perfect in their kind; and therefore as they were all equal in their natural faculties, so they were all equally capable of increasing their Species.

AND as we have likewise shewn, (*p. 427.*) that they must have had objects suited to their faculties; so they must be all equally provided with such objects.

AND if so, as it will follow from hence, that there must have been an equal number of Men and Women made, that every one might have one: So from hence likewise we may conclude,

THAT Mankind was originally encreas'd by Pairs, by which I mean, that there must have been, either two at a time born, or if not, there must have been a regular Succession of the Sexes; so that if the Male was born first, the next must have been a Female.

AND since we observe in Nature an aptitude, or power in the Female Sex, by which they are *capaces generationis & speciei propagandæ* sooner than the Males by a year at least, we may thence conclude, that the first child was a Male.

AND this gives us an account from the nature of things, of the early maturity of Women before Men; for if but one was born at a time at first, that must be near a year older than the next; and by consequence, if the elder were a Male, he would, when arrived at a due age, want a proper object for his natural faculties, unless the next were a Female, and made to ripen so much sooner in proportion. But this by the by.

BUT yet, tho' the nature of every person requir'd, and by consequence, had a natural right to one, for the increase of the Species; it does not thence follow, that they had any natural right to any particular one, or that they must alway be confin'd to the same one.

INDEED if we suppose only two persons made, they had a natural right the one to the other, as being under a natural, and necessary confinement to each other.

BUT as the reason of their confinement to each other was, that there were no other persons to multiply the Species by, but themselves; so Reason could not thence conclude, from the nature and reason of the thing, that they should

Burnett. continue under such confinement, when the nature of the case should be alter'd, and there should come to be more persons capable besides themselves.

BUT much less could it conclude, as to their posterity, that because their first Parents were confin'd to one another by necessity, that they must therefore be so confin'd, who were under no such necessity.

ALL that the nature and reason of things requires, is, that every one have such an object suited to his faculties, as to answer the end and reason of those faculties, which is the increase of the Species; and so long as it is thus, the nature and reason of things is so far answer'd, whether by one object, or another; and there is so far nothing in reason to make it necessary, and by consequence, nothing to give a right to one more than another.

NO, on the contrary, we have before shewn, that in the first and natural state of Mankind, all things were in their nature common, and that no one could have any natural right to any thing, any farther, or any longer, than he wanted it:

AND therefore tho' Mankind, as having natural faculties and appetites for the increase of the Species, had a natural right to one another's assistance, in the gratification of those appetites for that end; yet it could be no longer than those appetites continu'd, nor than, 'till that end was attain'd.

AND therefore since in that state, as we have shewn before, they had no appetites to one another any longer than 'till Generation was effected; it will follow, that after Generation, as they could in this respect have no further want of one another; so neither could they have any further right to one another; and by consequence must be naturally free, and unconfin'd to one another.

'TIS true indeed, we have already prov'd that, as ev'ry one has a rational principle of his own, so every one must judge and chuse for himself; and what any Man is oblig'd to do, so far we have shewn before, he has a right to do.

AND by consequence, any two persons, as having this Right, might agree to appropriate themselves to each other.

BUT then, as reason is the guide of a rational choice, so the natures and reasons of things are the guide of Reason; and therefore unless we can conceive something in the nature and reason of things, to determine Mankind in their state of Purity always to chuse the same person for the increase of the Species, any more than the same food to eat, when all things were perfect in their several kinds, equally agreeable, equally beautiful.

AND unless we can find out something, that might determine them to think, that it would be more for the happiness of Society for one to be appropriated to one, than for all to have a liberty to all; we must conclude, that in such a state, they could not incline to such a choice:

NOW that it would manifestly tend to the prejudice of Society, should Mankind be permitted to multiply their Species without any confinement to one another, is universally acknowledged by all civiliz'd nations, by the laws, which are every where made against it.

BUT yet whether this was discoverable by natural Reason, in a state of pure nature, is a matter of reasonable dispute.

FOR tho' they knew, no doubt, much more by their Reason, than our Reason is capable of attaining to; yet that we know this is not owing to our Reason, but to our Experience and Observation.

WE do not discover, that it is prejudicial to Society, by any inconsistency, that there is in such a liberty in itself, to the nature of things, or to the nature of the happiness of Mankind in their primitive and original state.

FOR the happiness of Mankind, we have shewn to consist in being govern'd by right Reason, and had they continu'd in their primitive state, all their faculties and appetites had been subject to Reason, as to the object, the manner, and measure of their enjoyments; and by consequence, as this could not be naturally prejudicial to Mankind, so Reason could not possibly think it so; because the exercises of our faculties, upon their proper objects, in subjection to Reason, falls in with the notion of Happiness.

AND since it was not naturally prejudicial to Society, if it be enquir'd, how it comes to be so now; it is because we are not in our natural state. *Burnett.*

THAT was, as we have shewn before, a state of Perfection, but we are now (as shall be shewn) in a state of Corruption. And,

As that was a state, wherein all the operations of Nature were govern'd by Reason:

So this is a state where our appetites and passions are too strong for Reason; so that, if they were not under some confinement, by what we call Marriage, Society must sink into the utmost confusion.

THIS, I say, we know by observation, and experience of our corrupted state, and 'tis by this only, that we are capable of knowing it.

AND since 'tis self-evident, that in a state of Purity, Mankind could not possibly have this experience; and therefore could not know the necessity of such Marriages; it will follow,

THAT so far as this is necessary to be known, as it could not be discovered by Reason; so it ought to be made known by Revelation.

AND therefore here is evidently some Revelation necessary to the institution of Marriage: And if so,

THEN as the Reason of the institution of Marriage is to prevent the ill consequences, that the want of such an institution must bring upon Society, upon the corruption of Mankind; it will follow, according to the reason of the thing,

THAT this institution should be establish'd before that Corruption.

NOW whether there was any such Revelation in a state of Purity, concerning the institution, and appointment of Marriage, is again a matter of fact, which, as I observ'd in the former case, can only be known by history; and if we have any such history of the first state of Mankind, which agrees with the foregoing reasonings, we have, so far, no reason to doubt its truth.

IN this then likewise the history of *Moses* agrees, where we are no sooner told of the Creation of Man, but there is provision made of a help meet for him, that he might have an object suited to his faculties.

AND as it is necessary in the nature of things, that there should be an equal number of Men and Women made, that the World might be increas'd by pairs; so here we are told of only two persons made.

AND as it was necessary to the happiness of the World, that the Species should be increas'd in the way of Marriage, and that too of one to one; so here, as we are told, but of two persons made, we are likewise told of a divine appointment, that they should be so appropriated one to the other, as to be esteem'd but one flesh. And,

THAT whoever should, from thenceforth, take to himself a Wife, he should cleave to her, and not be separated from her, no, not by the strongest obligations, that nature lays upon him, even to his Father and Mother.

AND thus far right Reason, and Scripture agree.

Thirdly, ANOTHER thing necessary to be made known to Man by a supernatural Revelation, ev'n in a state of Purity, was Language.

FOR we have already shewn, that ev'ry thing was put in such a state, at the Creation, as was suitable to its nature and end.

AND therefore, as Mankind was made with a natural faculty of Speech, by which they were naturally capable of Society, and Conversation; so they must have been placed in such a state of Society, as was suitable to that faculty; and by consequence, such a Society as they were capable of conversing with.

AND since this faculty was made perfect in its kind, and therefore perfectly capable of being exercis'd in Conversation, so soon as they were made; it will follow, that, if they were put in such a state, as was suitable to their faculties, it must be such a state as they could converse together in, so soon as they were made.

BUT how this could be without a Language, and how they could come by a Language, in a natural way, so soon as they were made, is the question.

IF

*A third
Revelation
necessary in
a State of
Purity, re-
lating to
Language.*

Burnett. IF we can conceive, that they might attain this in an instant by the acuteness of their faculties, then they could have no need of any further assistance.

BUT if it be not conceivable, as certainly 'tis not, how they could attain this so soon, in a natural way, we must then conclude, they had it in a supernatural; and what they could not do by Reason, was done by some extraordinary internal Revelation, such probably, as we commonly distinguish by Inspiration.

NOW whether 'twas thus, or not, we are not told, in any history we know of; nor is it of any consequence that we are not.

THE history of *Moses* so far agrees, as to shew us they had a Language at that time; and how they came by it is not material to be known:

BUT yet according to the best Reason, 'tis more than probable, it was by Revelation.

THUS we see what extraordinary Revelations there were, even in a state of Purity.

C O R O L L A R Y.

AND from hence we may infer the falshood of that notion, which is commonly receiv'd, and by which Men frequently define a state of Nature, as a state without a Revelation.

FOR from what has been said, 'tis abundantly evident, that there never could be any such continued state; but that there must have been very early Revelations, made not long after the Creation.

IF indeed by Revelation be understood, what we Christians, by way of excellency call so, the holy Scriptures; and if by being without a Revelation, be meant only, a being under the government of Reason, as the general rule, and guide of our actions; this may indeed, in a limited sense, be call'd a state of Nature, inasmuch as it agrees with the true notion of a state of Nature, in this particular respect.

BUT it would be much plainer to call it a state of Reason, that being a term, that would much better distinguish it from a state of Revelation, and such, as would not be so liable to mistake, or exception.

AND this I have been the more careful to take notice of, that nothing may be omitted, that will give any light to what I am sensible is very rarely understood:

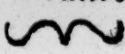
FOR tho' there be nothing more common in all our writings, and nothing more familiar in all our discourses, than to talk of a state of Nature, and the laws of Nature, and the principles of natural Religion; yet there is nothing that I have yet had the happiness to meet with, that has given us any rational account of that so much talk'd of State; or shewn us what those laws and principles are, so as to prove them to be purely natural.

BY which expression I do not understand their being innate, and born with us, as if they were something in our very natures; but I mean their being founded in the original natures and reasons of things.

I SAY, original natures of things; for tho' we have several learned Treatises to prove Religion from the natures of things; yet they have generally this flaw, as I observ'd before, that they have not distinguish'd the original, and perfect, from the present corrupted state of things; by which means they speak of several duties, as natural, which are not purely, but accidentally so, their obligation only arising from the natures of things, as they are now, and not from what they were at first:

So that, tho' they have done great service to Religion, by their learned labours; yet they have not taught us to think so clearly; nor have they prov'd it so plainly, and so easily, as they otherwise might have done.

THIS Error therefore I have been careful to avoid, and as I have endeavour'd to fix a right notion of things thus far; so I think I have given you an open view into a true state of Nature, and all things relating to it.

AND from what has been said, we may be able to form a more perfect idea *Burnett.* of the divine government of the World, in respect not only of its natural, but  corrupted State.

A further view into the government of the World, considering it, as in a State of Corruption.

GOVERNMENT is nothing else but the guidance, or direction of things to their end.

AND as the end of all things is the happiness of the World; so the way, or means, by which God guides the World to happiness, is the true notion of the government of it.

AND if so, then, as that which is necessary to the happiness of the World, is necessary to the government of it:

So if we would form a perfect notion of the government of the World, we must consider what we can conceive necessary to the happiness of it.

NOW this we have already done in part, so far as relates to a state of Nature, in which, as the happiness of the World consists in being govern'd according to the natures of things; so this may be call'd the natural government of God.

BUT then, as a state of Nature was such a state, wherein every thing had a Nature suited to its end, and was provided with means for the attainment of it:

So we have shewn before, that by acting according to their Nature, in the use of those means, all things must certainly have attain'd their ends.

AND by consequence there could be no other operation of God, necessary to the everlasting happiness of the World in a state of Nature, besides what was done at the Creation, but Preservation.

AND therefore if we suppose any further operation of God necessary to the happiness of the World now, than what was done at the Creation; we must necessarily suppose, that the World is not now in its original state of Nature, or in that state it was created in; but that things are either altered in their Natures, or do not act according to their Natures:

AND if so, then if we would form a rational view of the nature and necessity of the government of the World, we must consider;

First, How far things are fallen from that original state, in which they were created.

Secondly, WHAT we can conceive necessary in the nature of things to the happiness of the World, considering the circumstances they are fallen into.

Of the Fall of Man.

As to the *first* of these, that all things are not in that original state, in which they were at first created, is as certain, as 'tis evident, that all things are not now so perfect in their kind, as their several kinds were originally made.

AND that they are not so, we ourselves, alas, are but too sensible, by a woful experience, in our own Natures:

FOR we find ourselves vastly different from our original, that is, from the perfection of our first Parents:

WE find that we have not only a great weakness in our understandings, and a strange disorder in our wills and affections; but we likewise see a woful corruption of our bodily faculties, both as to their moral, and natural perfection.

FOR there is now no longer that just proportion and crasis of blood and humours; nor that lasting stability of constitution, which the natural perfection of the body requires; nor is there that absolute subjection of its appetites and passions to Reason, in which its moral perfection consists; both which our first Parents were originally created with.

BUT on the contrary, there is too visibly a *law in our members, waging war against the law in our minds, the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit a-*

Burnett. gainst the flesh; and we find ourselves not only liable to sorrows, and sicknesses, pains, and diseases, but at last under an unavoidable necessity of death.

So that there is an evident change wrought upon our Natures; and we are but too plainly degenerated, and miserably sunk, very far below that primitive perfection, which our first Parents had, when they came out of their Maker's hands.

AND this change, and imperfection of human Nature, I call the corruption, or depravation of it, in that it is thereby become in a worse condition, than it was made in.

AND if so, then since the human Nature was created in a perfect state, as being necessary to a perfect happiness; from hence it will follow, that so far as we are wanting of that original perfection, so far we are wanting of the means that are necessary to our happiness; and there must be more requir'd to make us happy, since this alteration of our Nature; and by consequence another method of government necessary to the World, than there was at first, before that alteration happen'd.

AND since the natural reason of this government is, that things are not, as they ought to be, but are altered from what they were; it will follow,

THAT according to the different degrees of this alteration, so must there be different methods of government.

AND since government is nothing else, as has been observed, but the ordering of things to their ends, so as shall be most for their happiness, according to their Natures; if we can discover from the circumstances the World is fallen into, what means may be necessary in the nature of things, to the happiness of the World, we shall be so far able to form a right notion of the means, that are necessary to the government of it.

NOW this we may be able to do in some degree: For since we have already shewn, that the happiness of Mankind requires the perfection of their faculties, both of Body, and Mind; and that not only in respect of the faculties themselves, but likewise of their moral subjection to right Reason:

AND since we have likewise shewn before, that Mankind were originally, not only made for this happy state, but made in such perfection, as was suitable to it:

As it will follow hence on the one hand; that so far as they are fallen from this state of original perfection, so far they are fallen from happiness, and by consequence can never be capable of perfect happiness, without being restored to this original perfection:

So it will likewise follow on the other hand, that this restoration must be the great end of that government, that designs our happiness.

AND by consequence, that whatever is a necessary means to this restoration, is a necessary means of the government of the World:

AND if so, then since Mankind are, as we have shewn, so far fallen from their original state, that,

First, In respect of their bodily Nature, instead of a natural perfection of its faculties, which we have shewn in a primitive state, was such, that it was naturally capable of continuing for ever, and therefore in a state of immortality; instead of this, I say, since they are now become corrupted, and mortal, and labour under an unavoidable necessity of death; it will follow,

THAT if this natural perfection of our bodily faculties be necessary to our happiness, (p. 423, 424, &c.) it must be the design of that government, which orders all things for the happiness of the World, to restore us to such a natural perfection again, as that *this corruption shall put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality.*

Secondly, SINCE Mankind are so far fallen from the moral perfection of their Nature, that the inferior faculties are now no longer in their primitive subjection to the mind; it will follow,

T H A T as this subjection is necessary to our happiness ; (*p. 428.*) so it must *Burnett.* be the design of that government, that orders things for the happiness of the World, that our faculties be restored to their subjection again.

A N D thus we see, according to the natures of things, the general design of the government of the World.

B U T if we further consider, what we have before shewn, that God governs all things according to their Natures, natural things in a natural way, and rational things in a rational way ; from hence we may be able to discover further the general methods, that appear to be necessary for the compassing of these general designs. And therefore,

First, T H O' it is the general design of providence, that Mankind be restored to a state of immortality ; yet as God governs natural things in a natural way ; since the Nature of Man is now become mortal, and under a natural necessity of dying ; we must thence conceive, that the general method of restoring Mankind to immortality, will be, such as consists with this natural necessity of Death ; so as that, in the general method of Providence, Mankind must die according to their nature, before they shall be made immortal.

A N D if so, then since the restoration of Mankind to life, after death, is the very notion of a Resurrection ; it will follow,

T H A T the general method of restoring Mankind to immortality will be a Resurrection from the dead.

Secondly, T H O' it is the general design of Providence, that Mankind be restored to the moral perfection of their Nature, in the subjection of their inferior faculties to Reason ; yet as God governs rational Creatures in a rational way, so we must conclude, that the general method of doing this, will be such, as shall consist with their rational Nature, that is, their understanding and freedom ; and by consequence, that it shall be ordinarily effected.

First, B Y furnishing the understanding with necessary knowledge, and by directing it to proper and suitable means, for the attainment of that end it aims at.

Secondly, B Y influencing the will to determine itself to them by suitable and sufficient motives, and leaving it to chuse according to Reason.

A N D if, notwithstanding all these methods on God's part, and the strictest endeavours, and compliance on ours, it shall be found at last to be naturally impossible to attain that perfection in this life, which we were originally created in, and which is necessary to a perfect happiness, we may then conclude,

Thirdly, T H A T God will bestow what Man cannot attain : for 'tis self-evident, that what is necessary to be done, and yet cannot be effected in a natural way, does, in the nature of things, require a supernatural ;

A N D therefore since this perfection is necessary to our happiness, and is the end of that Providence, which intends our happiness, it will follow,

T H A T so far as it is beyond the natural power of Man ; so far it is necessary to be supply'd by the supernatural operation of God. And by consequence,

First, I F there be any thing necessary to be done, which exceeds our natural powers to do, in order to the attainment of this perfection ; we must conclude, he will supply us with supernatural assistance here : And,

Secondly, I f when we have done our best, we shall still fall short of that entire perfection, which is absolutely necessary to our happiness ; we must then conclude,

T H A T at the raising of the dead, he will fill up what is wanting of perfection hereafter ; and by consequence, the state of the happy, in another life, must be such a one, wherein not only *mortality shall be swallow'd up of life*, but all *imperfection shall be done away*.

B U T then, as the natural reason of these operations is, their being necessary to the happiness of the World ; we may thence rationally conclude, that he, who governs all things according to their natures and reasons, will proportion these several operations according to the nature and reason of them.

AND

Burnett. AND therefore, tho' God will supply us with a supernatural assistance, where it is wanted; yet as the natural reason of that assistance is, the necessity or want of it, by reason of our weakness; so we may conclude, that this assistance will not only be given in the course of Providence, in such measure and degree, as is suitable to that weakness, or want, that makes it necessary; but also that it shall not be given in any other measure, than it is necessary, or wanted, that is, not in such a measure, as to do for Men, what they have a natural power to do for themselves; or such as shall force them to do, what they can, but will not do for themselves: And by consequence, if Men will not do that for themselves, which they have a power to do, and is necessary to their perfection and happiness, as we may conclude, that they shall be left without a supernatural assistance here; so they shall be likewise left in a state of imperfection, and unhappiness hereafter.

AND as this unhappiness is the natural consequence of their imperfection, and this imperfection is in their very Nature; so this unhappiness must, in the nature of things, be as lasting as their Nature; and therefore if the one be immortal, the other must be everlasting.

AND so likewise *secondly*, tho' God, in the course of his providence, will, as we have shewn, give the World such means of knowledge, and instruction; and such suitable, and sufficient motives to practice, as are necessary to their circumstances; yet we must conceive, that this will be done only in proportion to their necessity.

AND therefore, according as the circumstances, and occasions of Mankind have been, or shall be different; so we may conclude, there have been, or will be different methods of the divine providence, according as those different circumstances, and occasions have, or shall require.

AND if so, then, as we may conclude on the one hand, that if Mankind had ever been under absolute necessity of a Revelation, there has been some such Revelation made; so on the other hand, since the necessities of different ages, and nations may be different; and that may be absolutely necessary to one age, or nation, which is not so to another: Nay since even in the same age, and nation, some things may be necessary at one time, which are not so at another; and some things more necessary at one time than another; (as sometimes Mankind may want instruction, and knowledge; sometimes motives to inforce what they already know; sometimes assistance to act accordingly; and that too in different natures, and different measures) we may hence conclude, that if there has been any Revelation, there may, for ought we know, have been many, and that what God has thought fit to reveal to the World, has not probably been delivered all at once, but at different times, and in divers manners, according to the different occasions of Mankind.

I SAY, 'tis very probable, and for ought we know there may have been many: But yet we can never be sure by bare Reason, that there have; because we can never be sure what is absolutely necessary.

MANY things may appear to us to be necessary, which may not be so; and many things may be really necessary, which may not appear to us to be so. And therefore we must naturally conceive, that, as God may reveal himself, where we may not see any necessity in the nature of things to call for such a Revelation; so he may, in many cases, suspend the Revelation of his will, where, to our weak Reason, the particular circumstances of Mankind, may seem to require the contrary.

BESIDE, tho' from the necessity of any thing to the happiness of Mankind, in such, and such circumstances, we may certainly conclude, that God, in his goodness, is disposed to act accordingly; yet as the reason of his inclination to do so, is their happiness; so we must conceive he will do it, or not do it, according as he sees it will contribute to their happiness.

HIS goodness disposes him to do good to his Creatures, only according to their Natures and Capacities; and if his wisdom sees they are not capable of what he is otherwise disposed to do for them; because he sees, they will not re-

ceive good by it, but the contrary; he may, very wisely, forbear the doing it, *Burnett.*

AND therefore, as the immediate end of God's Revelation to his people, is, their instruction; 'tis the greatest wisdom to make his Revelations in such time, and manner, as shall best answer this design; and that is, not barely according as they are wanted most, but also according as the people are best disposed to receive instructions by them. And this God alone is judge of.

AND therefore, tho' in many cases we may think there is reason to expect such, and such dispensations of Providence, as being suitable to such, and such particular necessities; yet, if things do not fall out according to our expectations, 'tis not for us to *charge God foolishly*, and say his operations are not just, and right, because *his thoughts are above our thoughts, and his ways above our ways.*

BUT however, tho' we cannot make a certain judgment in this case; yet as we are sure, that in the general method of Providence over Mankind, God will suit his dispensations so, as shall be most necessary to their happiness; so if we can by any means discover what necessities Mankind may have been under in time past, and what means might be necessary to their happiness in those necessities, this is as good a foundation to build our notions of Providence upon, and as clear a rule to square them by, as Reason alone can furnish us withal.

BUT then, as we can know nothing certainly of what has past in former times, but by history; so we must have recourse to this for our satisfaction, as to what God has done in this particular: And if we have any credible history, that gives an account of the divine Providence, we shall have as much assurance in this matter, as the nature of the thing will bear, because 'tis capable of no other proof.

NOW that I call a credible history in its own nature, which relates matters of fact, agreeing with the natures and reasons of things: And as the natures and reasons of things have been the Rule, by which we have here form'd our notions of Providence; so far as any history of Providence agrees with those notions, so far we must esteem it to be a credible history.

The general Credibility of the Scripture History prov'd.

NOW such a history we have in that book which we call the *Holy Scriptures*; which is apparently an history of Providence; and not only gives an account of God's transactions with our first Parents, in a state of Purity, but of the origin and progress of Sin, and the several consequences of it; and the different circumstances Mankind were brought into by it; and the various methods of God's dealing with them according to those circumstances, agreeable to what we have before demonstrated.

THE account it gives us of a state of Purity has been already consider'd; and as for what it says of Mankind after their depravation, we find it correspond in every instance.

FOR since we have before shewn, that it was Sin alone that gave occasion for all the various dispensations of Providence; we have here not only an account of the rise and progress of Sin, and the various methods used to stop the encrease, and repair the inconveniences of it; but we are here told, what was before prov'd, that it is the whole design of Providence to make Mankind happy, and that by this only means of making them holy.

AND as this holiness cannot be attain'd without proper rules to walk by, and proper means to prevent Sin, and disobedience; so we have here in this book such laws prescrib'd as are reasonably and holy, such as in their own nature tend to holiness; and we have likewise an account of such methods taken, and such motives offer'd, as are naturally fitted to prevail upon every reasonable Man to order his conversation by.

AND as the happiness of Mankind cannot be attain'd in this World, in this state of imperfection and mortality; so 'tis here set forth as the general design

Burnett. of Providence, (according to what we have before prov'd) to bring them to a state of perfection and immortality in another World, according as they shall be capable of it; where after a joyful resurrection, *this mortal shall put on immortality, and the spirits of the just shall be made perfect.*

AND as the particular end of all God's particular dispensations is before shewn, to be the happiness of those particular persons they are intended for, and vouchsaf'd to according as their particular necessities call for them: And as the particular circumstances of people must be different, at different times; and therefore must, in the nature of things, require different dispensations; so we have here an account of various methods taken, at different times, according to their different necessities:

AND as we have already shewn, that Mankind may have been in such circumstances as to need a Revelation; and if so, that it is highly credible God may have vouchsafed some suitable Revelation to them: And as there may be different Reasons, for different Revelations, at different times, according as the necessities of Mankind are different: So we have here an account in this book not only of various Revelations, all tending to promote the wise ends of Providence in making the World happy; but such also as were given, not all at once, but *at sundry times, and divers manners*, according to the different occasions and capacities of those, whom they have been all along given to.

AND upon this account it seems to carry in it a very strong evidence of the general credibility, both of the history itself, and of the Revelations contain'd in it; as being of such a Nature, and given for such an end, and in such a manner, as according to our foregoing reasonings, 'tis reasonable to expect they should be.

BUT because the credibility of this book is of the last importance, to Religion, and ought therefore to be thoroughly establish'd, I will not content my self with this general proof of it; but consider it in a more particular manner, and examine the several parts of it distinctly.

AND whereas it seems, as I said, to be a history of Providence, the whole design of which, towards Mankind, is to consult their happiness according to their necessities, I will examine the history step by step, to see what account it gives us of the World; and what particular circumstances it represents Mankind to have been in from time to time; and what methods of Providence, we may reasonably think, such circumstances might stand in need of; and whether it informs us of any such provision made for them, as was suitable to their necessities: And if we find it answer in these particulars, we have all that is requisite in the nature of the thing, to demonstrate it a consistent and credible history.

BUT as this will take up a great deal of time, and will better answer my design in another place, I will beg leave to postpone it a while, till I have made some observation from what I have before said, relating to the Christian Religion. For as I have deduced from the foregoing reasonings the credibility of the Scripture History in general; so they likewise afford us a strong and evident proof of the Christian Religion in particular.

FOR, if what I have already prov'd be true, that God is dispos'd to do good to his Creatures according as their natures and necessities require; and by consequence, when they are under a necessity of a Revelation, we must conceive, he is dispos'd to grant such a Revelation to them:

THEN from hence it will follow, that if the World was fallen into such a condition, before our Saviour came, as they could not be happy in, and had no possibility of being deliver'd from, by the power of natural Reason only; and therefore requir'd a supernatural Revelation, there has been some suitable Revelation given.

AND if Christianity came to assist the World in this, and has actually furnish'd Mankind with all things necessary; there can be no stronger proof than this, from the nature and reason of the thing, that this is the Revelation of God,

God, as being what agrees with our foregoing notions of his Providence, and what we may in reason expect from him. *Burnett.*

Now, whether the World was in such circumstances, as to need a Revelation, and whether Christianity is such a Revelation, as their circumstances requir'd, is our next business to consider.

The Necessity of a Revelation before the coming of Jesus Christ.

WHAT circumstances the World was in, is matter of fact, and can be known only by history; and as 'tis a particular providence of God to us, to preserve many antient Books, which are universally allow'd to be written about that time; so we are sufficiently inform'd from them, of such a sad and degenerate state of Mankind, as we cannot in reason think, they could have ever been able to deliver themselves from; and yet could not possibly have been happy in.

THE World was then divided into two sorts of people, *viz.* the Jews, who worshipp'd the one true God, and the Heathens, who were all Idolaters.

As for the Jews, what state they were in, and what necessity they were under of a new Revelation, shall be consider'd in another place.

As they built their Religion, on what we call the Scriptures of the *Old Testament*, it will be first proper to inquire into the Nature of those things recorded there, and what influence these had upon them; before we can fairly determine, what farther helps their circumstances might stand in need of; and this shall be particularly consider'd hereafter.

THAT which I shall here employ my meditations on, is the necessity of a Revelation to the Heathen World.

AND this I think will abundantly appear, if the want of almost every thing necessary to the happiness of Mankind, as rational Creatures, will be allow'd a sufficient proof of it.

The State of the Heathen World consider'd.

THE first thing necessary to the happiness of the World was to know, wherein happiness lies, and the proper means to attain it by: But this was so little understood in those days, that it was matter of continual dispute even among the learned themselves; and their notions about it were so various, and unsettled, that St. *Austin* tells us out of *Varro*, of 288 different opinions concerning it.

AND whereas we have before shewn, (p. 442, 443.) that the ultimate happiness of Man consists in the enjoyment of God, and that the way to enjoy God is to be like him; and that this likeness is to be attain'd only by Virtue and Holiness, (p. 443.) it is absolutely necessary, that Mankind should not only be inform'd of the true Nature of God, with the true notion of Virtue and Holiness; but also be encourag'd in the practice of them:

AND whereas in order to this end, 'tis absolutely necessary that a due sense of God, and our dependance on him be firmly settled, and preserv'd in our minds, by proper acts of outward worship; so 'tis equally necessary, that the World should be inform'd in this, so as always to do it acceptably.

BUT how necessary soever the knowledge of these things was, the Heathens knew little of them.

WHAT notions they had of the divine Nature, we may judge by that rabble of Deities, they paid their adorations to; and those absurd superstitions, and sometimes cruel and inhuman rites, that were every where publickly practis'd, and approv'd of.

INSTEAD of one, they worshipp'd innumerable Gods, of various kinds, and different orders: They had their celestial and terrestrial, aerial and infernal, their national and domestick, their good and bad, their male and female Deities. Of these Deities some were only evil spirits; others Men and Women of evil lives; some were brute beasts, and those too of the most vile and noxious kinds; some were things without Life, and some without Being; nay, so low

Burnett. were they sunk in this respect, as to worship such things, as modesty forbids to name.

THESE are such facts, as every body knows, and whilst they were thus corrupted in their notions of God, we cannot expect to find them otherwise in their worship: And it ought to be no surprize to us to read of many odd, and foolish rites celebrated to the most ridiculous, and contemptible objects: Of cruel and inhuman Sacrifices offer'd to evil and blood-thirsty Deities: Nor can it be strange to find a drunken *Bacchus*, a lewd *Flora*, a lascivious *Venus*, a thievish *Mercury*, an adulterous *Jupiter*, and such like, worshipped in such practices, as were suitable to their respective characters.

THIS was the way of the Heathen worship, as all antient histories inform us; and under such ideas of the divine Nature, and his Worship, what can we expect their morals to have been?

'TIS one of the first principles of Religion to imitate the Deity, and whilst they had such notions of their Gods, as these; as they could have no true principles of morality; so they could have little of it in their practice: And 'tis no wonder to find, what we read of them, that they were universally sunk into the very dreggs of corruption and debauchery.

ST. *Paul's* account of the Sins that reigned among the *Corinthians* in his time, is, that they were *Fornicators, Idolaters, Adulterers, Effeminate, Abusers of themselves with Mankind, Thieves, Covetous, Drunkards, Railers and Extortioners*, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. And of the *Ephesians* he says, that they walk'd in the vanity of their mind, having their understanding darken'd, being alienated from the life of God, thro' the ignorance that was in them, because of the hardness of their hearts, and being past feeling, they had given themselves over to lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness, Eph. iv. 17, 18, 19.

AND in the Epistle to the *Romans*, ch. i. we have such a frightful catalogue of horrid vices, as is hard for a modest person to read without a blush.

AND this testimony of the Apostle, whom I here consider only upon the level with other ordinary writers, is abundantly confirmed by their own Poets, and Historians.

HORACE, Juvenal, Martial and *Petronius* abound with the grossest impurities, agreeable to the deprav'd relish of the times: And we are inform'd of their abominable dissolution of manners, not only by *Tacitus* and *Suetonius*, but all others that have occasion to take notice of their morals.

AND whilst we consider this wretched state of Mankind, so ignorant both of the Nature of God and themselves; and so abominably deprav'd both in Mind and Manners; when their very worship was vice, and they could serve their Gods, and their lusts in the same act; how was it possible for them to attain true happiness, whilst they continued in a condition so directly inconsistent with the very notion of happiness?

THERE could be no possibility of it in the nature of things, but by a Reformation, and how this could be effected is the question.

IT must be either by Reason, or Revelation, and that it could not be by Reason, and that therefore there was a necessity of a Revelation, is my next business to demonstrate. That is, I am to prove, that Reason alone, without the help of Revelation, was not sufficient to reform the World, and bring them out of that state of ignorance and immorality, they had then fallen into, and labour'd under, before Christianity appear'd.

I AM the more careful to repeat the question, and set it in a full, and proper light, that it may be rightly understood; for want of which this argument is generally perplex'd. 'Tis common for people to lay a mighty stress upon the power of natural Reason, to discover all things necessary to the happiness of Man; and thence to infer the needlessness of Revelation.

BUT let the natural power of Reason be what it will, this is nothing to the purpose: Reason may have a natural power to do, what it cannot do in such, and such circumstances: And the point in question is, not what is knowable by Reason, or what Reason can discover in its purity, or in that enlighten'd

state we are now in, under the assistance of Revelation; but what it could do *Burnett.* towards the reformation of the World, and the bringing them out of that ignorant, dark, and wicked state they were then plung'd into, before Christianity appear'd.

THE very reason of a Revelation is the necessity of it to the happiness of Mankind, considering these circumstances: And 'tis no argument against the necessity of a Revelation to tell us what Reason could do without regard to those circumstances, but what it could do for their recovery out of them.

'TIS with Reason, as it is with the Eye, which has a natural power to see, and therefore can naturally need no help to discern such things as are the proper objects of it, all requisite circumstances suppos'd: But yet if any of these requisite circumstances be wanting, if the faculty itself be impair'd by any defect in the nerve, or the distance be too great, or the medium too thick, our eyes may be of no use to us; and we may want a guide to direct us in the plainest things, as much as if we had no such natural faculty.

THIS was the case with the World: They were not in their natural state, they had their understandings darken'd, and had strong prejudices to master, and they wanted a guide in many respects, as if they had no reason at all: So that the question, as I said, is not what Reason could do of its own Nature, but what it could do for the World, in the circumstances they were fallen into, towards their recovery out of them: And if I can demonstrate that the World could not possibly recover themselves out of those sad circumstances by the bare use of their Reason only, I shall sufficiently demonstrate the necessity of a Revelation.

NOW in order to this, we may first consider, that whatever the natural power of Reason was in a state of purity and perfection, there was little remaining of it in that degenerate state of Mankind we speak of: If there had been any such power amongst them, one would naturally expect to find some fruits of it: When they found what condition they were reduced to, methinks they should have seen the necessity of a reformation, and set themselves with all their might to compass: And what is the consequence of this, but that some body would have drawn out some intire scheme of Religion and Morality, from the natures and reasons of things, as a guide to the people in those days, as we do from the Scriptures under Christianity? This, I say, one would naturally expect, if it lay so readily within the reach of Reason: But there is nothing of this kind has yet appear'd in the World.

'TIS indeed an easy matter for Christians, with the light of Revelation shining round them, by which they are taught every thing necessary, to shew how they agree with Reason; but it would not have been so easy to discover those things by Reason only, without that light.

MANY attempts have been made by learned Men, even in our enlighten'd state, to draw out a scheme of natural Religion; but we have never yet seen one, that is purely natural, or that is sufficient to answer all the occasions of Mankind, as to Faith, Worship, and Practice: And 'tis very probable they would not have been able to have gone half so far in it, as they have done, had it not been for the light of the Christian Revelation.

BUT suppose some lucky thinkers have hit upon it, after various unsuccessful attempts of others; 'tis very unreasonable to make this the standard to judge of human Reason by in general, as if all people were able to do the same; whereas on the contrary, it should rather be a convincing argument from experience, that Mankind in general are not able to do, what either has not been done at all in any age; or if at all, it may be by very few, and that too after many unsuccessful attempts, tho' it had been wanted many thousand years.

BUT whatever has been done by any under the influence of Christianity, 'tis certain, there was nothing like this before it, and whatever bright genius's might do, reasoning is not the talent of the common herd: The bulk of Mankind are very little capable of making discoveries: Tho' they have a faculty of Reason; yet 'tis very evident, that they ordinarily make but little use of it, and

Burnett. are very little dispos'd to think, or reason of any thing, but what concerns the common affairs of life; they receive their opinions generally by education, tradition, custom, example, interest, or authority; and as they seldom suspect they are in the wrong, where they agree with other people; so they are usually tenacious of those notions, they have already taken up, especially if they have been bred up in them; and are so far from disputing the truth of them themselves, that they can seldom bear others to doubt of them.

THIS is the known temper of the generality of the World, but 'tis much more to be expected among people given up to their vices: They have no end to aim at, but their pleasures; and as they have no other pleasures, but those of this World, 'tis their business to make the best of them, and to avoid every thought, that may disturb, or interrupt them.

AND therefore for them to think of God, or Religion, to harbour any notions, or give way to any reasonings that may be inconsistent with those pleasures they place their happiness in, is very unnatural and unlikely.

AND if so, considering how wicked the World was, whatever Reason was naturally capable of doing, there was little to be expected from it, whilst they were so little able, or dispos'd to make use of it.

THEY, who are most likely to find out Truth, and Error, must be Men of speculation and learning, that have leisure, and application, and liberty of thought: And there were many of this sort in those days, who made it their business to seek after wisdom, and enquire into Nature; and these Men, perhaps some people may imagine, might have been able to teach the rest of Mankind, and so have been the instruments of a Reformation.

BUT even these Men were able to do little in it, and that not only, because they were but few, in comparison of the whole Heathen World; but also, because the things to be reform'd were such, as they could not find how to mend; or if they had, they were not sufficient to reform them, having difficulties to master, which they were not equal to: And there were several things necessary to this Reformation, which their Reason could not discover, at least not in such a manner, as was necessary for the end of Reformation.

First, THE things to be reform'd were such, as they could not find how to mend.

I HAVE already taken notice of several things to be reform'd, relating both to their minds, and manners:

As to their minds, I have shewn, they were ignorant of the happiness of Man, and how to attain it; the nature of God, and his worship: And as there was a necessity in the nature of things, in order to their happiness, that the World should be recover'd out of this ignorance, there was by consequence a necessity that they should be thoroughly instructed in these things.

BUT the Philosophers of those times were not able to give them instructions, as being ignorant themselves: For after all their nice enquiries after Truth, they could not arrive at any certainty about it.

I HAVE already taken notice what little agreement there was amongst them about the *Summum Bonum*, or happiness of Man: And they were no less uncertain about the nature of God. *Diogenes Laertius* gives us an account of many strange opinions, they held about it: And *Cicero* tells us there was such dissention amongst them upon this head, that it was hard to reckon up their different sentiments; and he sets down the notions of above twenty of them, and those too Men of worth and character, all equally extravagant and absurd.

AND tho' some Philosophers hit upon the truth, in some respects, and had juster, and more noble thoughts of God, than others; yet they were all mere conjectures at the best, such as they themselves could not depend upon: For even *Plato*, and *Cicero*, two of the best and wisest of them acknowledg'd, there was nothing certain; and the celebrated *Socrates* ingenuously confess'd, that all he knew of God was, that he knew nothing. And 'twas for this reason no doubt, that he endeavour'd, as we are told, to draw Men off from divine, and celestial contemplations, as being what he found too high for human Reason to attain

attain to the knowledge of, and to betake themselves to the study of civil life: *Burnett*

So that Reason could do little here.

AND as to the worship of God, which was another thing to be reform'd; tho' it must be confess'd, that many of the Philosophers saw the vanity and folly of the customary superstitions, and the fabulous stories of the Poets, and severely inveigh'd against them; yet it does not appear that they condemn'd Idolatry; for they were all Idolaters in practice, and not only conform'd to the customary rites of worship themselves; but gave it out, as a standing Rule, that all people ought to do so.

AND tho', as I said, they saw the vanity of that worship; yet, as they knew nothing better to set up in the room of it, they thought it reasonable to stick to what they had; as being establish'd by the laws of their Country, and as such, confirm'd by their sacred Oracles, which oblig'd all to worship according to that Rule: And upon this foot, the wisest Men amongst them, *Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Plutarch, Epictetus, and Cicero*, condemn all dissention from the accusom'd rites, as a thing that ought not to be allow'd.

THUS it was with the Philosophers, as to Idolatry; which, as it was evident, they had no desire to reform; so it does not appear they knew how to do it.

BUT suppose they had been ever so well inform'd of the true worship of God, and had been ever so zealous for the reformation of the false one; yet there was no moral possibility of succeeding in it, by the power of Reason only, there being several obstacles to it to be remov'd, which Reason was not sufficient for.

FOR the worship then in use had not only been establish'd by law, and confirm'd by their Oracles, which they esteem'd the voice of God; but it was what had been long receiv'd, and what the people had been bred up in: It had been handed down to them from their Fathers, and was justified by universal practice: So that it had Antiquity, Universality, legal Establishment, and divine Authority (as they conceiv'd) to inforce it.

AND can we think that all this could, in the nature of things, be set aside by the bare speculations of a few thinking Men, without any authority to support them, but bare argument?

WE all know what power the prejudice of Education has with us, and how hard it is to part with any Opinion, or alter any Custom, or Habit, we have been bred up in: And we all know what a natural affection all people have to the customs of their Country, and what regard to the judgment of their Ancestors; and by consequence what weight a Religion establish'd, and that establishment back'd with Antiquity, must carry with it: We know this by our own experience.

AND what hopes could the wisest Men have, even of being so much as heard against this?

BUT when this was confirm'd by their Oracles, and these Oracles were esteem'd the voice of God, what could all the reason in the World signify against this? Is Man wiser than God? And yet every one must appear to them to set his wisdom above God's, that should pretend to oppose, what, in their opinion, had been confirm'd by God.

AND therefore nothing, but an undeniable evidence of a divine Authority, and such as was sufficient to overthrow the authority of their Oracles, could possibly convince them of their error: So that there was a necessity in the nature of things of a divine Revelation, for the reformation of Idolatry; and that that Revelation should be confirm'd by God, in proper tokens of his almighty Power: And as Miracles are what all Mankind allow to be the proper evidences of such a power, there was, by consequence, such a necessity of Miracles, that no Revelation could have been sufficient without them.

AND

Burnett. AND since the Philosophers pretended to no such thing, there could be no reformation expected from them, whatever other qualifications they might have had.

BUT besides, this Religion had not only the prejudice of education, the weight of long prescription, the sanction of civil, and, as they thought, divine authority to confirm it; but it was supported by publick, and private interest.

WHAT the Atheist unreasonably objects against all Religion, was, in a great measure, true of the Heathen, that it was the invention of Priests and Politicians.

AND tho' 'tis very probable, that a great part of it had its beginning from evil spirits; for the scripture, if it shall appear to be of any authority, says, that they worshipp'd Devils, by whom all their cruel, and inhuman rites, might, in all likelihood, have been impos'd: Yet it is very evident, that some part of it was of human invention, and set up only with a politick view. The deifying of great and famous Men, was invented for the raising up a spirit of Ambition; thereby to incline Men to noble actions, for the benefit of the Commonwealth: * And whatever was the origin of their Auguries and Oracles, (which sometimes likewise probably might be under the influence of evil spirits) as shall be shewn hereafter; yet 'tis certain, they were made use of at proper times, to serve the occasions of the Publick; and in cases of emergency, they commonly receiv'd their instructions from the Government, what judgments to make, and what answers to give out, according as the state requir'd. *Cicero* tells us, that *Demosthenes* had observ'd this of the *Pythian* Oracle in his time; and we have reason, says he, to suspect the like corruption in others: † And in the same book he tells us, that, tho' their Ancestors had err'd in many things, yet the antient Religion, and particularly the *Jus Augurum*, (how little truth foever there was in them) were retain'd, for the many advantages of them to the Commonwealth. || ‡

AND if this was the reason for the retaining them so long, the same reason would hold for the continuing of them; and for the opposing all endeavours for their abolition, if there were no other reason for it but this.

BUT as this Religion was calculated for the service of the Publick, and on that account would probably be supported by it; so was it no less for the interest of particular persons, who would be equally desirous to preserve it on their part. 'Tis certain the whole Priesthood subsisted by it, and innumerable families of other people, whose livelihood depended on those arts, which furnish'd their Temples with Images, Utensils, and Ornaments; and the superstitious which consecrated Baubles and Trinkets.

AND considering this, we cannot think it could be easy, for bare Reason, to abolish this Religion: If we could suppose the state would have been patient under the opposition, which no reasonable Man can think; yet we cannot suppose this of the Priests, and the People, who had their whole subsistence from it: We cannot think, that they would suffer themselves to be talk'd out of their Maintenance, by a few (seemingly) forward and assuming Men, that set up to be wiser than all the World.

AND as there were known laws against innovations in Religion, we may be sure that they would not be wanting to put them in execution, with the utmost rigour and severity.

WE see how it was in the Apostle's days, in this very case, what usage they met with every where; and it must have been so for the same reason with the Philosophers, had they pretended to Reformation, as the Apostles did.

* *Cic. de N. D. lib. 3. In plerisque civitatibus intelligi potest augendæ virtutis gratia, quo libentius reip. causa periculum adiret optimus quisque, virorum fortium memoriam honore deorum immortalium consecratam.*

† *Cic. de Divin. lib. 2. Demosthenes quidem, qui abhinc annos prope 300 fuit, jam tum Φιδανίζων Pythiam dicebat, id est, quasi cum Philippo facere, hoc autem eo spectabat, ut eam a Philippo corruptam diceret, quo licet existimare in aliis quoque Oraculis Delpbicis aliquid non sinceri fuisse.*

|| *Ibid. lib. 2. Errabat in multis rebus antiquitas, quam vel usu jam, vel doctrinâ, vel vetustate immutatam videmus. Retinetur autem & ad opinionem vulgi, & ad magnas utilitates Reip. mos, religio, disciplina, jus augurum, collegii auctoritas.*

‡ *Ibid. postea. Existimo jus augurum, etsi Divinationis opinione principio constitutum sit, tamen postea Reip. causâ conservatum, ac retentum.*

SOCRATES was an instance of it, who, tho' he did not oppose their *Burnett.* Polytheism, and Idolatry, but only some of their more ridiculous fictions and superstitions, yet he fell a sacrifice to their fury, and lost his life.

AND if this was the case, as it evidently was, it requires a great deal more zeal to undertake such difficulties, more courage and resolution to disregard such dangers, and more patience to undergo such persecutions, than the Philosophers probably were indued with, or Reason could furnish them withal.

HAD their reason been clear in every point, so as perfectly to see the truth themselves, (as 'tis evident they did not) yet few have such a love to truth as to venture their lives for it, when they may avoid it; especially when they have no assurance of a better World.

BUT if some might have been so hardy, as to try the experiment, they probably would have been but very few, not sufficient for number for an universal Reformation: And if we suppose them to escape all danger, and meet with no opposition, but to have a free liberty to speak their sentiments; yet it must be an incredible strength of Reason, that must not only prevail upon all the World, to part with their most inveterate prejudices, but also inspire Men with such a love of Truth, as that they would be content to starve, or beg, merely for the sake of it.

AND yet thus it must have been with vast crowds of families, and all the Priesthood upon the Reformation of Religion; so that there could be no probability of any such thing.

AND if no probability, when we suppose the best, that is when we suppose no hazard to be run, no opposition to be struggled with: When we suppose the Reformers perfectly instructed in every necessary truth themselves, so as not only to discern all the errors to be corrected, but also what truths to introduce in the room of them:

IF, I say, there was no probability of a Reformation in this case, what possibility could there be of it under the utmost danger and opposition, when the wisest of them could be sure of nothing, and were so far from opposing the erroneous worship, that they actually conform'd to it, and encourag'd it?

FROM these considerations the argument is clear for the invalidity of Reason, and the necessity of a Revelation for the Reformation of the Heathen World, as to their Minds, and Notions, in respect of the nature of God, and his worship; and the nature and means of their own happiness.

AND from all these things put together, we hence are taught, what kind of Revelation that must be, which should be given to reform the World, in the circumstances it was at that time in; namely,

First, THAT it inform Mankind of the true notion of happiness, and how to attain it, of the nature of God, and how to worship him, as God; and likewise that it be not only intended for, but suited to the effectual overthrow of Idolatry.

Secondly, THAT it be supported by the power of Miracles, and such Miracles as should be fitted to convince the World of the falshood, and delusion of their Oracles.

Thirdly, THAT it be deliver'd by proper persons, with suitable zeal to undertake all difficulties, suitable courage, and resolution to disregard all dangers, and suitable patience to undergo all persecutions.

The Necessity of a Revelation to the Reformation of the Manners of the World.

WE come now to consider the next thing to be reform'd, which was their manners; and how far Reason alone was capable of doing this.

AND here I will demonstrate, that Reason was not capable of doing this, in that there were several things necessary for it, which Reason could not discover; or at least could not discover in such a manner, as was necessary for the end of Reformation.

Burnett. THE first thing necessary for the reformation of the World, was a standing sufficient rule of life, by which they might be taught what to do, and avoid, and how to amend what was amiss: For without such a rule it could not be, but the World must grow every day worse, and worse; because in such case, they must be govern'd only by example; and in a World abounding with bad examples, 'tis impossible but vice must every where encrease; and as they could not know, what was amiss, they could not by consequence know how to mend.

NOW whether Reason could discover such a rule of life in the state, that the World was then in, is the question.

AND in answer to it, 'tis very certain, that there are some things so apparently good and evil, that they lie within the reach of every one's understanding, and for those particular instances, there could need no other light, or rule, but Reason: But the World might be very bad for all this, for this could be a rule no farther than it went: And whereas morality is necessary to the happiness of Man, in order to a compleat and perfect happiness, the rule of morality ought to be compleat, and perfect.

NOW this, I say, is what Reason could not discover. If it could have done it, we may expect to find something of it, remaining in the writings of their learned Men.

BUT 'tis certain, there is no such thing in fact: And 'tis impossible, even now, for the wisest Man to pick up an intire and perfect system of Morality from them altogether: Because there are some eminent shining virtues, that they knew nothing of, but rather accounted vices; such as Humility, Meekness, and Patience of injuries; and some great and heinous sins, that many, and some, that most of them allow'd; such as gladiatorial Homicide, exposing of Children, Fornication, Incest, Sodomy, and community of Wives; and some sins, that all of them accounted virtues, or at least not vices; such as Ambition, Revenge, and Self-Murder.

I NEED not quote authorities to prove this, as being known to every one, that reads their writings; and if reason could not find out such obvious things, and that too in the wise, and the learned, it must be a very weak and insufficient guide.

BUT suppose some few of them had hit upon the truth, and could have reduced it into a regular and perfect system; yet this could never have been of use to the reformation of the World, till it was receiv'd, as a standing rule; and it could never be receiv'd as such, till all people should be convinced it was the truth; yet even the Philosophers themselves were so far from any probability of this, that there was nothing about which they were more divided, than their notions, even of good and evil.

THIS was a matter of so universal dispute, that *Maximus Tyrius* tells us, there was no coming to any agreement about it; *neither Nation agreed with Nation, nor City with City, nor Family with Family, nor one Man with another, nor any one with himself about these things.*

AND if the wise and the learned could not find out this, what could Reason do in vulgar people? They must be taught by others, and who were sufficient for it? The Philosophers could not teach, what they did not know, and their disputes would rather perplex, than satisfy; and instead of making them wiser, make them worse.

AND tho' some of them should have happen'd to have hit the point, yet how should vulgar people know how to find it among so many divided Sects? This could not be done without examining the dispute, and turning over, it may be, many learned Volumes, and running over a maze of tedious subtleties, which they had neither opportunity, nor capacity to do.

AND, if they could not chuse what Sect to be of by their Reason, what must the consequence of this be, but that every one would chuse by his inclination, or interest? And therefore their notions would be most espous'd, and adhered to, which would make them most easy in their vices, and best serve their worldly ends and purposes:

AND

AND in this case the *Epicureans* had vastly the advantage, whose principles denied the Providence of God, and made bodily pleasure the happiness of Man. *Burnett.*

AND as this Sect was therefore in the greatest vogue, and reputation, most adher'd to by the Great, and most countenanced by the Wits; this alone would have been sufficient to defeat all hopes of reformation; this Sect not only being the most likely to spread, but its principles directly destructive of morality.

BUT suppose all the Philosophers had agreed in their opinions, and fix'd upon a certain rule of life; to make it sufficient to the end of reformation, 'twas necessary, the world should submit to it, as such, but how could they possibly compass this? They could but reason with the World at best; and we all know, how little Reason can prevail against Inclination, Habit, Lust, and Interest.

THERE is no reforming the World, but by Authority, and such Authority, as can govern, and influence the World. Human governours may do much in particular Societies, towards the restraint of vice, and preventing the outward practice of it: But they cannot prevent such vices, as may be committed without their knowledge, much less can they make Men virtuous; that is, they cannot reform their minds, nor subdue their passions, nor awe their consciences, nor plant good dispositions in their hearts; without which there can be no true virtue.

NOTHING could do this, but the authority of God; and therefore nothing can be a sufficient rule of life, but what is founded upon this Authority.

THIS all the celebrated lawgivers of the antients were so thoroughly sensible of, that they all pretended they had their laws from heaven: As *Numa* from the Goddess *Egeria*, *Lycurgus* from the *Pythian Oracle*, *Minos* from *Jupiter*, &c. And tho' these were all mere pretences, to delude the people into Obedience; yet this plainly shews, that they thought the belief of a divine authority the only proper means for this; and there was no regard to be expected to their laws without it. And if this was necessary to the reformation of the World, there could be no such Authority; and therefore no reformation possible without a Revelation.

'TIS true indeed, it may be said, that the laws of Nature are the laws of God; and as these laws are discoverable by the light of Reason, so soon as they are discover'd, and made known to the World, they carry their own authority and obligation along with them; and there needs no other Revelation to enforce them.

'TIS very right: But they must be first discovered, and made known to the World, and that too to be the laws of God, before they can, or ought to be received, as such; and in what method could the wisest Philosophers do this?

THO' the laws of Nature are discoverable by Reason, yet this is what the antient Philosophers did not, and what it is impossible they should discover; as being ignorant of the two great hinges, upon which the laws of Nature turn, *viz.* the Nature of God, which is the measure of all perfection, and the right notion of the happiness of Man, which is the great end, to which all our actions ought to be directed, and by which they are to be adjusted.

AND tho' many of them have talk'd excellently well of virtue, and advanced morality to a great pitch, considering the times they lived in; yet they did it chiefly upon principles of honour, and generosity, and conveniency to the welfare of civil life.

THEY never urg'd their precepts, as the laws of God, nor did they require the observance of them, out of duty to, or for the glory of God: They consider'd them only, as fit, and reasonable to be observ'd, and that whosoever acted according to them, was deserving of the praise of a wise, a great, or a good Man; but we never find them pressing any duty as a natural law to be observ'd in obedience to the God of Nature, and in the nature of things necessary to happiness in the enjoyment of him.

THIS is the foot, as I have shewn before, upon which the law of Nature stands; and since they never pretended to any thing like this, we have reason to conclude, they knew nothing of it.

Burnett. BUT suppose they had discover'd this, and could have drawn out a system of moral laws upon this foot, how was it possible to make the World receive them, and submit to them, as the laws of God? And yet this was necessary to be done, before they could be of use to the reformation of Mankind.

THIS could be done only by reason and argument, and this reason and argument ought to be so clear, that every understanding should be able to comprehend it; and that too deliver'd with such force of persuasion, as to leave no possible room for doubt: And yet how was it possible to do this?

THE subject itself is dark, and intricate, and requires a long train of close and abstracted reasoning to make it out, which lower understandings are not judges of, and therefore are not affected with.

AND if they had capacities to understand this, they cannot be supposed to have leisure, inclination, or opportunity, to attend to it: And considering how depraved the World was, how confirm'd, and harden'd in wickedness, we cannot think the most prevailing reasonings would be regarded, that came to disturb them in their darling vices, and teach them what they had no desire to know.

THIS some of the Philosophers themselves complain of, and we have it confirm'd by daily experience, even in Christian countries, where, tho' Men do not want to be inform'd of their duty, yet we find it the hardest matter in the World to persuade them to the practice of it, when once they are engag'd in a vicious course of life, and we must reason against Lust, and Interest.

BUT suppose there had been no difficulty in this respect, in the reformation of the World; that is, suppose the people had been ever so well dispos'd to hearken to instruction, and ever so desirous of doing their duty; yet the wise Men of those times were not equal to the work.

IT was a work of inconceivable difficulty, and vast extent, that requir'd many hands, and great zeal, and application.

IF all were to be reformed, all were to be instructed, and what was a small handful of Men to all the World? And what could the wisest Men have done in the ordinary and human way of instruction, (supposing them ever so many, and ever so knowing) where every thing to be taught was to be demonstrated to the satisfaction of every person concern'd? What abilities, what time, what art must it require to apply themselves to every person, in a manner suited to their several tempers, and capacities; and that too with such persuasive force, as to root out all their prejudices, correct all their errors, subdue all their passions, conquer all their evil habits, and customs, and draw them off from the irregular biases of a bad education, and a wicked life.

WHAT progress may be expected in such a case, we may judge by what we see among ourselves: Tho' we are deliver'd from Heathen darkness, and the people in general know the will of God, and want little instruction in the rules of life; and tho' we have a guide appointed for every parish, and one day in seven set apart for holy things, and appropriated to religious worship, and instruction, besides what is done in private, yet still we see, but little reformation: Tho' the chief thing wanted is not demonstration, but only to be reminded of their duty, and excited to practice what they already know, and allow to be so; yet few Men have the comfort to say with any assurance, that they have ever made one convert from a wicked, to a truly Christian and holy life: And if we can do so little in these days of light, and knowledge, where sufficient numbers are provided for the work, and that work so little in comparison of what was necessary in Heathen darkness, what possibility could there be of any success from the best improvements in Philosophy, in the hands of a few Men only; and they here, and there scatter'd up and down in places only of great resort for Learning?

HAD they travell'd up and down to teach the World their duty, and should we suppose them to have made many converts; yet this would do but little to the bettering of Mankind, without a constant attendance, and a continued succession, not only to make a further progress, but to cherish the seed already sown: For 'tis natural to conceive, that many things would be wanted, which could not be provided for all at once: Many errors would arise, that must be corrected,

many

many doubts, that must be satisfied, and many would waver and fall away, that *Burnett* must be reduced, and this probably in every place :

AND therefore, as there was a necessity of a standing ministry, so unless there were a provision made for this, little could be done in Reformation. And yet there could be no probability of any such thing, unless the Philosophers would undertake it of themselves: And how is it possible to suppose this? That is, to suppose that they could all agree to leave their habitations, and worldly affairs; and transplant themselves and families to distant places, and countries; and those of the cold and barren, as well as the rich and the warm situations; and all this upon their own mere motion, and pure zeal.

No Man can be so wild, as to think this possible. But especially, if he considers the account we have of them, that they were not Men of this reforming temper. They consider'd things only as Philosophers, and not as Reformers, out of a love of wisdom, and fame, rather than virtue, or the love of Mankind.

ST. *Paul* tells us, that the Philosophers of his time, in the famous *Athens*, met together only to tell, or to bear some new thing: And *Tully* says, they made their several institutions an ostentation of science, rather than a rule of life.

BUT suppose it had been otherwise, and that they had all been intent upon Reformation, and for that purpose had bent their whole study to convince the World of the necessity of it; that they could give them a perfect rule of life, and were able to prove it to be the law of God, from the natures and reasons of things; yet the World would not easily have believed what they said, unless they had lived suitably to this themselves. To pretend that what they taught was the law of God, and that by virtue of that law all vice must be abandon'd, whilst they themselves lived in contradiction to it, was not a likely way to reform the World: And yet thus it was with the Philosophers. *Diogenes Laertius* gives us an account of many, and those too, great and scandalous vices, that most of them were guilty of: And *Tully* says, there were very few, whose lives were not a contradiction to their precepts, which is also confirm'd by *Seneca*, and others.

BUT suppose there had been no objection in this respect; that is, tho' they had been ever so zealous for the reformation of the World; and ever so exemplary in their lives; yet there was one thing still wanting, which was so necessary to the work, that without it no reformation could be possible, and that is, Language.

FOR as all the World was to be reform'd, as I said before, all must be instructed: And as this instruction must be given in a human way, and by consequence in the respective languages of the several countries, these languages must first be learn'd by all, that would engage in this undertaking: Unless we could suppose, that every part of the World was furnish'd with sufficient genius's of their own, endued with all the necessary gifts for the reformation of their respective native countries. But this would be too wild a supposition.

FOR tho' *Greece* and *Italy* abounded with great Men, yet there were many other parts in the utmost ignorance, and barbarity, without the least glimpse of light; and 'tis hard to conceive how so much light, as was necessary to a reformation, should in a natural way arise from so much darkness.

THEIR instruction therefore must come from other people, and their teachers must necessarily be first instructed themselves in the languages of the people to be taught by them.

NOW this in the nature of the thing requires a vast deal of time, and application; and is a thing of the utmost difficulty for Men of years to attain to, so as to be able to discourse with that readiness, and clearness, which is necessary for the conveying a new sett of notions into people's minds.

SO that if we could suppose all the Philosophers of the learned nations, unanimously resolving to transplant themselves into the several corners of the World; and that there was such a sufficient number of them, as the nature and extent of the work requir'd; and that they all would have had zeal, and patience enough to apply themselves to the learning of the necessary languages; yet unless we can

Burnett. suppose, that they could attain to such perfection in them, as to be able to carry on their undertaking readily, no benefit could be expected from them.

BUT this is what cannot reasonably be supposed, and what never was, nor was ever likely to be attempted.

BUT suppose still further, that there was no want of language, nor of any of the forementioned qualifications; yet there could be no possibility of the reformation of the World, whilst the Religion then establish'd, and universally practis'd, continued in force.

FOR this alone had a tendency to corrupt Mankind, not only, as it set up wicked Men, and Women, as the objects of divine Worship; but also, as it authoriz'd the worst of vices, as devotion, such as Lewdness, Drunkenness, and Cruelty.

AND yet this Religion was so far from being oppos'd by the Philosophers, that as I said before, they universally conform'd to it, and encourag'd it.

So that from all these things consider'd together, it evidently appears, beyond all reasonable doubt, that there could be no reformation, as the World then was, by the bare power of Reason only; and by consequence, as we are hence assur'd of the necessity of a Revelation; so we are hence further taught, what kind of Revelation it must be, *viz.*

First, THAT it offer to the World a perfect, and sufficient rule of life, built upon the authority of God.

AND as nothing ought to be received, as coming from God, without a proper evidence of his authority; so,

Secondly, IT was necessary that this rule of life should be attended with, and confirm'd by some such proper tokens of a divine attestation, as that it might certainly be known to come from God.

AND as the end of all this must be naturally defeated, by the ill lives of those who deliver it to the World, if God should make use of human instruments; so,

Thirdly, THERE is a necessity in the nature of things, that they, who should be chosen, and appointed for this work, should be persons of exemplary virtue and holiness.

AND as all this would not answer the end of reformation, without a due zeal in the persons employ'd, and the gift of languages to fit them for the undertaking; so from hence we may expect,

Fourthly, IN a general Revelation, that these things be found attending it.

AND thus have I done with the first consideration, *viz.* the necessity of a sufficient rule of life, in order to a general reformation of manners; and the invalidity of Reason to discover this.

Secondly, ANOTHER thing necessary for the same end was, an assurance that God would pardon sin. For when the will of God should be open'd to the World in a perfect standing rule of life; and when by comparing their lives with that rule, they should see how they had offended God; it would be in vain for them to think of Reformation, unless they could be assur'd of a Reconciliation: And yet whether God would be reconcil'd, or not, and what must be the means of that Reconciliation, was impossible for bare Reason, at that time, to know. For this must depend upon the will of God; and how could this be known without a Revelation?

REASON would tell them that God was good: This is visibly seen in the whole Creation, in that ample provision, which is every where made for the comfort, and well-being of all his Creatures.

THE same Reason would tell them, he is good to sinners in his wonderful patience, and long-suffering towards them, under the daring, and multiplied provocations they are every day guilty of.

BUT this would not shew them how long this patience would last, nor how far this goodness to sinners would go.

THE same Reason that would assure them of God's goodness, and patience, would likewise inform them of his wisdom and holiness; and as these must agree in the same perfect Nature, Reason can admit of no other notion of his goodness,

ness, but such as is consistent with his wisdom and holiness: And the natural consequence of this must be, that God will shew himself, as good to sinners, as his wisdom, and holiness shall direct. And who can tell, when the wisdom, and holiness of God shall call for harsher methods of dealing with them? Burnett.

IT may be said indeed, and that very plausibly, that the reason of God's displeasure against sinners is their sin; and by consequence, to prevent, and remove that displeasure, the way is to repent, and forsake sin.

AND indeed the best thing a sinner can do is to repent; but still this will not make the sinner innocent: And we are sure, that in good, and wise governments, there may be good reason to punish malefactors, however penitent they be; and if repentance be not always sure of pardon, how can it be depended on?

IT is certain, of itself it cannot; and the Heathen World never did depend upon it: Nay, it does not appear, they ever had any notion of it; for I do not find it once mention'd in any of their writings.

THEIR chief dependence was upon sacrifices of expiation, which would have been needless, if repentance had been thought of; or at least had been thought sufficient.

AND yet, even in these, their Reason was at a loss, how far they would be accepted by God. For as 'twas natural to think, that great, and many sins would require more, and greater expiations; so they must be involved in continual doubts, about the value, and merit of their sacrifices.

AND accordingly we read, how they sometimes offer'd Beasts; sometimes Men, and of these sometimes the lowest, and basest of the people; sometimes the higher, and more honourable: And from Men, that had forfeited their lives to the Publick, they were carried on to the more innocent Virgins, and Children, whom they sometimes offer'd up in horrid multitudes.

THIS was more or less the practice of all nations, even the most polite and civiliz'd; and in this practice both learned and ignorant agreed.

AND there can be no stronger evidence given of the uncertainty they were under, as to the means of reconciliation with God, by the help of bare Reason only.

AND therefore as we may conclude on the one hand, that so far as it was necessary to be inform'd of this, so far there was a necessity of a Revelation: So likewise it will follow on the other hand, that if God should vouchsafe a Revelation for the reformation of the World, this must be another qualification of it.

Thirdly, ANOTHER thing necessary to the reformation of the World, which Reason could not discover, was, to be assur'd they should be able to do their duty, in such manner as to be acceptable to God; so that if they had a rule to walk by, and the means of pardon made known to them, they might be encourag'd to act accordingly: But without such an assurance, 'twould be in vain. For what signifies a rule if we cannot follow it; and to be sure of pardon, if we repent and reform, if it be not in our power to do it? And yet the World had reason enough to suspect this. For considering the dismal depravation of Mankind, Reformation was the hardest thing imaginable.

'TIS difficult to bring a harden'd sinner, even but to resolve to part with his sins; because 'tis to part with what is dearest to him: And when he first comes to try the experiment, and put his resolutions into practice, he will find so many rubbs, and obstructions in his way, so many passions struggling with him, and so many temptations fawning on him, that it will be no easy matter to resist them: And as 'tis natural to conceive he will be often overcome, how sincere soever he may be, these instances of his weakness, inconstancy, and unsuccessfulness, will be apt to incline him to suspect his strength, and prompt him to quit what he has begun, as a thing he is not able to go through with: And therefore there seems to be a necessity of some encouragement in this case, and some hope of assistance to be given.

OR if he should be supposed to continue stedfast, and resolve to go on as well as he can; yet so much corruption will still cleave to him, and his best obedience will be so mixt, and imperfect, that if he were to attend to Reason only,

Burnett. only, he could take but little comfort in it, as being a just doubt, whether God would accept it.

F O R if God be a holy Being, that hates iniquity, as every one must believe, before he will part with his sins; how can any Man think, that this holy Being will accept such impure, and imperfect services, mixt with so much sin and folly?

I T may be said indeed, we do our best; and this is as much as any one can do: But we ought to be very sure of this, before this can be of any comfort to us: And I believe there are few but are conscious to themselves, that they may do better than they do.

B U T supposing this plea to be really true, that we can do no better, than we do, thro' our past wicked habits, that we have contracted; yet who is the cause of this inability, but ourselves? So that this is but in effect to make our past, an excuse for our after faults, and who in reason could depend on this, as sufficient for the favour, and acceptance of God?

I F God has a right to all we can do, and we have made ourselves incapable of doing what he had given us power to do, our own mismanagement will deserve his resentment, as much as our weakness may call for his mercy: And which of these must fall to our lot, depends intirely upon the will of God, which he alone can make known to us.

A N D if there be a necessity of knowing this, in order to the reformation of the World, as there is a necessity of a Revelation of it; so this likewise must be another character of that Revelation, that comes to reform the World, that it give them some hope of assistance, and acceptance.

Fourthly and lastly, A N O T H E R thing necessary to the reformation of the World, was, to be assur'd of a future state, where they should be rewarded, or punish'd hereafter according to their behaviour here.

F O R if there be nothing to be look'd for beyond the grave, 'tis but reasonable to make the best of the present life: *Let us eat, and drink, for to morrow we dye,* is but a natural resolution; and we cannot think, that a dissolute World, in such a case, would have had any other concern upon them, but only to *make provision for the flesh, to fulfil the Lusts thereof.*

So that without the assurance of another World, there could be no reformation reasonably expected.

B U T how necessary soever the knowledge of this was, Reason was not able to attain to it.

T H E R E was indeed in all the World, so far as history informs us, some general, confused, imperfect notion of it; but they could never come to any such certainty about it, as to make it of any use to the conduct of human life.

'T I S well known, how the learned disagreed about it, some doubting of it, others absolutely denying it; and even they who favour'd the opinion most, could never rise higher, than a bare perhaps.

T H E Poets, who were the Prophets of those days, are the only persons that speak of it with confidence; and yet they represent it under such gross and extravagant ideas, as one would think must have been intended to make it matter of ridicule to reasonable and considering Men; and if they really believed their own descriptions, this alone is a sufficient evidence, what darkness human nature labour'd under, and how little they were able to deliver themselves out of it, by the power of unassisted Reason only.

A N D therefore so far as it was necessary to the reformation of the World, that Mankind be inform'd of a future state, as there was a necessity of a Revelation; so this likewise must be another character of that Revelation, that comes to reform the World.

So that from these considerations, we are further inform'd of these three qualifications of a divine Revelation, *viz.* the assurance of pardon of sin; of the acceptance of honest tho' imperfect endeavours; and of a future state of rewards, and punishments.

A N D whereas all these depend on the will of God; and there can be no assurance given of God's Will, but by himself; from hence we have a further proof

of what has been before mention'd, viz. the necessity of some such proofs to attend this Revelation, as are a sufficient evidence of its coming from God. Burnett.

AND since miracles are universally look'd upon, as such an evidence, we have here a reason in the nature of things, that this Revelation should be confirm'd by miracles: And from hence we likewise further see, that miracles, in this case, are not to be esteem'd mere arbitrary acts, that God condescends to do, out of his good pleasure only, but as acts so necessary to the reformation of the World, that no Revelation for that end could have been sufficient, nor could reasonably be depended on without them.

THUS we see the several characters of such a Revelation, as was necessary to the reformation of the manners of the Heathen World, considering the state they were fallen into, which may be reduced in a more regular order to these four.

The several characters of such a Revelation, as was necessary to the Reformation of the Manners of the World.

First, THAT it deliver a perfect rule of life, built on the authority of God, and inforc'd by the example of the first teachers of it.

Secondly, THAT it give them full assurance of pardon and reconciliation, assistance and acceptance, and a future state.

Thirdly, THAT it be confirm'd by the power of miracles.

Fourthly, THAT the first preachers of it be endued with proper zeal, and particularly with the gift of languages.

THESE things are, I think, abundantly demonstrated, and with these I shall conclude what I propos'd to say, concerning the corruption of the Heathen World; and what was necessary to their recovery out of it.

AND as we have thus seen, what they stood in need of, for the reformation of their minds and manners; the next thing which comes in course to be consider'd, is, whether Christianity answers to all this, and may reasonably be esteem'd a divine Revelation.

That Christianity is a Divine Revelation.

FROM the necessity of a Revelation, we may naturally conclude, that there has been some suitable Revelation given: And as Christianity was offer'd to the World, as such, we have nothing more to do in the examination of this matter, but to see how it agrees with the foremention'd characters, by which such a Revelation was to be known.

I WILL begin with those that relate to the reformation of the World, in respect of their minds, and notions; and the first thing, that I shew'd was necessary to a Revelation, which comes with this design, is, that it teach Mankind a true notion of happiness, and how to attain it; as likewise a true notion of God, and how to worship him, as God; and that it be not only intended, but fitted for the effectual overthrow of Idolatry.

AND this is so apparently evident in the Christian Religion, that no Man can be ignorant of it, that reads the *New Testament*.

As for the happiness of Mankind, every one must know, that it is not to be had in this World: As we are liable to crosses, losses, afflictions, sicknesses, and death, we need no other argument to convince us, that this is not the place of rest to Man, as abounding with *vanity and vexation of spirit*.

THE Gospel therefore has not placed our happiness here, but in another region beyond the grave, where all imperfection shall be done away.

AND as our happiness consists, as I have before shewn, in the perfection of our faculties, and in a due exercise of them on their proper objects; and since we are indued with the faculties of Understanding, the object of which is Truth; and of Will, the object of which is Good; and by consequence, it must be our highest happiness to have our understandings exercis'd on the highest, and most excellent Truth; and our wills upon the highest, and most perfect Good, which is God: So the Gospel places our ultimate happiness in him.

Burnett.

AND as we are to expect this happiness beyond the grave ; so it is to be in a place, where we shall *dwell with God*, and *see God* ; that is, shall be admitted to all the delights, that the knowledge of him, and all other truths by him, and the enjoyment of him, and all those comforts we are capable of receiving from him, can afford us.

AND as it is impossible in the nature of things to be happy, and take pleasure in God, or be admitted to dwell with him, without being like him ; and therefore in order to our happiness in God, we must be holy, true, good and merciful, as he is ; so the Gospel, not only in general requires us to be imitators of God, as dear Children, and to be perfect, as our Father in heaven is perfect ; but also has given us such rules to walk by, in order to the attainment of this happiness, as if we will but act accordingly, will work this divine likeness in us, and make us partakers of the divine Nature.

So that whilst we are walking according to these rules, we are all the time travelling to our rest, and fitting ourselves for those satisfactions, which, as they are prepared for, so they are only capable of being enjoyed by such, as are thus previously dispos'd for them.

THIS is a rational scheme of happiness ; and this is what the Gospel teaches.

AND as it thus provides for our happiness in another World ; so it has not been wanting to us, even here : For the very things that are prescrib'd us, as the necessary condition, and preparatory qualification for the glory above, are absolutely necessary for our welfare here : For there is nothing commanded, but what is in its own nature productive of some good, and nothing forbid, but what is really hurtful : So that what is injoin'd, as an act of duty, is intended only, as an instance of favour, and friendship ; and a means of promoting our own advantage. And if we will but follow the Gospel rules, which is wanting in nothing, that our welfare can require, we must be as happy as we are capable of being.

AND whereas there are several misfortunes, which cleave to us here ; and which are natural to our condition in this World, and we cannot be deliver'd from ; and therefore want some relief to support us under them, to make our lives easy, and comfortable to us, that we may want nothing, that is necessary to our happiness ; Christianity has likewise provided for us in this respect, and furnish'd us with such considerations, as are sufficient for us ; that is, not sufficient to remove the burthens themselves, because they are natural, but sufficient to comfort and support us under them ; so that, tho' we are weary, and heavy laden by them, we may yet find rest, and refreshment to our souls.

THIS is so plain to every understanding, that I need not go about to prove it : 'Tis enough that we know how to conduct our meditations to consider the point in a proper method ; and if we know any thing of Christianity, our own thoughts will readily suggest the rest.

AND as it has thus provided for the happiness of Man ; so has it likewise instructed us in the true nature and worship of God.

As for the nature of God, it is now no longer debas'd by those ignoble, and gross ideas, that possess'd the minds of the poor ignorant Heathens, representing him under the image of corruptible things : But he is now known to us, as he is, and as we have before demonstrated him to be ; that is, as one self-existent absolutely perfect Being, who made, and governs all things ; who tho' *he is the high and lofty one, that inhabits Eternity, yet he humbleth himself to behold the things that are in Heaven and Earth*, and that not as an idle, and indifferent spectator, careless of the affairs and actions of Men, but as a Governor every where acting, and in every thing.

ALL things are said to be his, and that he disposes them according to his will ; and that not an arbitrary, and imperious will, but a will directed by the best wisdom, in Holiness, Truth, and Goodness.

HE is set forth to us, as a Father to his Creatures, that does not neglect the meanest works of his hands, but is desirous of the good of all : But he is more especially the preserver, the Saviour of Men, who, if they will but behave themselves

themselves to him, as dutiful, and obedient Children, he will not only give them *Burnett.* all things, they stand in need of, but in all their distresses, he will advise and comfort them; and either mercifully deliver them out of them, or make them work together for their good.

AND with all this he is represented to us as a Judge, to whom we must one day give an account of all we have, and all we do, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.

THIS is the general notion of the God of the Christians; and this is not only such an idea, as is great and awful, but lovely and delightful; such as is not only agreeable to reason, and suitable to the nature, and necessities of Man, but productive of the highest honour, and esteem of God, the only true foundation of worship, and obedience.

AND with this likewise agrees the Christian Worship.

FOR as the Gospel has taught us to know God; so has it likewise to glorify him, as God, suitably to his nature and relation to us: As God is our Creator, and Governor, the giver of all good things, and the disposer of all events, as in the nature of things we ought; so the Christian Religion requires, that we come to him for what we want, and acknowledge his bounty in what we have, *being careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer, and supplication with thanksgiving, making our requests known unto God:* And this in such a way as is suitable to his nature: And therefore, as *he is a spirit*, it must be done *in spirit and in truth*; that is, not barely in a bodily exercise, or outward forms of godliness, but in a serious application of our Minds, and the sincerity of our Hearts: So that whatever we do, it must be done with an awful sense of God, and our duty to him; and an inward desire to please him; and therefore not only with fervency of spirit, and hearty zeal, but with the utmost reverence, and humility agreeable to our dependent state, and the distance there is between God and us.

AND this we are to do to him, and him only, the one Creator and Governor; the one all-sufficient God, and Father; without any corporeal image, or similitude of him, without rival, or co-partner with him.

THIS is such a notion of worship, as is a holy and reasonable service; such as all must allow to be right, and true; such as cannot but be agreeable to every reasonable Nature, and acceptable to a wise and holy God.

BUT to make all this truly Christian, it must be done in the name, and thro' the mediation of Jesus Christ; because it is thro' him alone, that we hope to be accepted.

FOR as we are all sinners, and are therefore unworthy thro' our manifold transgressions to offer any sacrifice to God, who is *of purer eyes than to behold the least iniquity*; so to keep up a due sense of our unworthiness in our minds, and of the heinous nature of sin, that it renders us odious in the sight of God, he will not admit us to approach his presence, to present any petitions to him, but what are, as it were, brought by a holy, and undefiled hand: And therefore he has appointed an Advocate for us, Jesus Christ the righteous: Who, as he came into the World for our salvation, bore our infirmities, and died for our redemption; so he now sits at God's right hand, and *ever lives to make intercession for us.*

THRO' him therefore we are requir'd to come unto God, and to ask every thing in his name, and for his sake.

THIS is the only article that distinguishes the Christian from a pure natural Worship, regulated by the dictates of mere Reason, conducted by the natures and reasons of things: And tho' this is matter of mere Revelation, yet it is such an institution, as Reason itself approves of, as worthy of God to appoint: As being not only highly useful to Religion in general, as it tends to preserve in us a due sense of our unworthiness as sinners; and of the holiness of that God, we sin against; and at the same time to comfort us in the assurance of his mercy thro' the intercession of a holy Saviour; but also as it was particularly necessary at the time of its appointment to the reformation of the Idolatry of the World.

FOR a great deal of this was evidently owing to a want of some Revelation of this kind: For all Mankind have had a notion (from what principles it came, it matters not) of the necessity of a Mediator. THEY

Burnett. THEY thought their Gods must be applied to, as great Men, and earthly Princes are, by the intercession of their favourites: And having no certain guide to direct their Reason in the choice of proper persons for this office, they set up to themselves various intercessors according to their bewilder'd fancies.

AND as this begat a great many foolish superstitions, and blind devotions; so for the cure, and prevention of this, there was a necessity of some Revelation in this case, from the want of which, so much mischief had ensued.

'TIS therefore a particular mark of the Divinity of this Revelation, relating to the worship of God, that it is appointed to be offer'd up thro' a Mediator; and that too such a Mediator as is sufficient for us: For he is such a Mediator, as is not only highly favour'd of God, as being his *only beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased*, and is our friend, and brother, that bears our Nature, and has felt our infirmities; but he is such a one, as we know by sufficient evidence, *sits at the right hand of God, and has all power given him both in heaven, and in earth*; so that he is not only willing, but *able to do the uttermost* for all those, *that come unto God by him*.

So that after this Revelation, there, was no longer need of that crowd of Mediators, which the Heathens sought out for themselves among their Dæmons, or Angels, and Souls departed, having one, who was all-sufficient for them, on whom they might depend with confidence; and therefore this was a most effectual way of rooting out that Idolatry, which had so universally prevail'd amongst them, and was by consequence a wise, and reasonable institution of worship, had it serv'd no other end, but this.

If it be any objection to this Christian scheme of Worship, that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is commanded to be honour'd as we honour the Father, by which he seems to be set up as a partner in his Father's worship, we must consider, that this makes no real difference.

FOR the Son is represented, as having the Godhead dwelling in him; so that when he is worshipp'd, it is not the manhood, but the Godhead that is worshipp'd in him, or thro' him.

AND as the *New Testament* says, that to the Christians, *there is but one God*, and that God, *the Father*; and since our Saviour himself says, that the Godhead, which *dwelt in him, was the Father*, to whom he was so united, as to be *one with him*, viz. the *Father*; it must follow, that that which is worshipp'd in the worship of the Son, must be the Father; who, in other places, is said to be *manifested in the flesh*, or human Nature of Christ, and to be *in Christ Jesus reconciling the World unto himself*. *

IN this view of that matter, deliver'd in plain Scripture words, understood in their plain, obvious, and natural meaning, the difficulty vanishes; and it is so far from favouring Idolatry in itself, that this likewise seems to have been appointed for the destruction of it.

FOR as God is an invisible being, 'tis a hard matter for Men, inured only to material objects, to address themselves to him, but under some material phantasm: And this, as it is in itself an Idolatry of the mind; so it was probably the origin of a great deal of the more refined Idolatries of the Heathens; who perhaps at first might worship the true God only, but under sensible and visible representations, according to those material imaginations, they had form'd of him in their mind: And by this 'tis probable, they might be led by degrees to think, that God was in himself, what those images represented him to be: And being thus carried on from one thing to another, they at last came to such a degenerate state, that the true notion of God was intirely lost.

NOW as Christianity came to reform the World, and to root out Idolatry from amongst them, it was necessary to that end, that this should be prevented: And it might probably be for this reason among others, that God was pleas'd to exhibit himself under the veil of human Nature, to restrain their roving imaginations from hunting after other unbecoming similitudes, and thereby fix their thoughts upon, and determine their worship to himself alone. †

* See *The Scripture Trinity intelligibly explained*.

† See *Dr. Scot's Christian Life*, Vol. II. Part II. p. 369, &c.

IF this be a right, as it is a rational account of this great mystery of Godli- *Burnett.*
ness, God manifested in the flesh, *a mystery kept from ages, and generations, and*
now made known unto us; we must conceive Jesus Christ, not only as a Media-
tor, as he is an advocate with the Father; but God seems to have consecrated
to himself his very flesh, as the medium whereby we must come unto him; as
if he intended thereby to be distinguish'd by the character of God in Christ
Jesus; to whom, as he is so united, as to become one with him, so he will
therefore be worshipp'd thro' him.

IF it be any difficulty with any one in the reception of Christianity, that he
cannot conceive how Jesus Christ can be so united to the Godhead, and yet act
as a Mediator between God and Man, we must consider what this mediation is;
his mediation, or advocacy is founded in Scripture on his being a *propitiation*
for our sins; and his *intercession* is represented to us by his going to heaven to
present the blood of his sacrifice before God, (as the High Priest us'd to do in
the Holy of Holies) who, tho' he dwells in Jesus Christ bodily, and acts in
him, yet he displays his majestick presence there.

So that his intercession is not any vocal intercession, but the presenting that
body before the throne of God, which God had prepar'd for him, whereby to
make an atonement for Mankind; in this consists his Advocacy, and Interces-
sion for us, as it shews before God the work done, and the price paid for our
redemption. And therefore when we pray to God, thro' the mediation of
Christ, we must mean only thro' the merits of that expiation he has made for
us; and in this sense, which appears to be the Scripture sense, is easily con-
ceivable, how he may be a Mediator, and Intercessor for us, tho' he is united
with the Godhead, and one with God.

THUS we see how Christianity answers to this first character of such a Re-
velation, as was necessary to reform the idolatrous World, in giving them right
notions of the happiness of Man, and the means of attaining it; and true no-
tions of the nature of God and his worship.

BUT as all this could signify but little to the reformation of the World, as I
have shewn, whilst they believed their own way of Worship divine, as having
been confirm'd by Oracles, which they conceiv'd to be the voice of God: So,

THE next thing necessary to a Revelation, was, such an apparent evidence
of a divine authority accompanying the first preachers of it, as was sufficient to
convince the World of their mistake, and shew them undeniably, that the Gods
they worshipp'd were no Gods, and that their Oracles were mere Delusions.

AND this is such a character that so evidently agrees to the Christian Reli-
gion, that it cannot be doubted by any one, that considers that wonderful series
of miraculous Works, which were wrought by our Saviour, and his Apostles,
in confirmation of their mission, and their doctrine: Works not only in their
own nature good, but also according to the universal experience, and observa-
tion of the World, exceeding the power of natural causes; done in open view,
before crowds of people, in the name of the one supreme God, the Creator,
and Governor of all things; and that too in confirmation of a Religion, in its
nature reasonable, and holy, that rejects all other Gods, as false, and all Hea-
then superstitions, as abominable, that can serve no wicked end, indulges no
carnal lust, or interest, but is calculated for the promotion of the glory of God,
and the happiness of all the World: And withal, these works done by persons
of no art, or base design, that could have no possible prospect of advantage by
endeavouring to delude Mankind, and that shew'd no tokens of any inclination,
or desire to do it.

SUCH works one would think should be a sufficient proof of the authority of
those that do them, and yet upon this foot Christianity stands.

THE Scripture, and ecclesiastical History gives us amazing instances of such
works, which in former days were never denied, even by the enemies of it:
The instances were so many, and so apparent every where, that they must deny
their senses, before they could deny the Facts: For this power was not like a
flash of lightning, that vanish'd as soon as it appear'd, but it continued several

Burnett. ages in the Church; and the effects of it shew'd themselves in such a publick manner, and upon every occasion, and among all sorts of people; and that with circumstances so surprizing, as must not only raise the wonder, but excite the curiosity of all to examine them carefully, that they might not be deluded by them: So that it is not strange to find, even the wisest adversaries of Christianity, such as *Celsus*, *Porphyry*, *Hierocles*, and *Julian*, acknowledging the facts as true.

AND if they be true, they are an abundant proof, not only of the divine authority of the Christian Revelation, but of the falshood of those Gods, and the vanity of those superstitions, which it came to deliver the World from.

BUT whatever evidence the Christian Revelation received from these works, yet there seems to be something more requir'd in this case, than bare miracles in general: For as the oracles gave authority to the Heathen worship, and were esteem'd by the people, as the voice of God; there seems to be a necessity of some such works, as had an immediate relation to this matter, and were fitted to convince them of their mistaken notion in esteeming them the voice of the true God.

AND 'tis worthy our observation how remarkably this character shew'd itself in the first beginnings of Christianity: For no sooner was this Revelation open'd to the *Gentiles*, but where-ever it came, it silenc'd their oracles, and forced their Gods from their Temples, so that the people sued in vain for their counsel, and assistance; and this it did in so remarkable a manner, that their own writers acknowledge and wonder at it.

PLUTARCH has left a book on this very subject; in which, tho' he does not impute this effect to Christianity, but, among other silly things, to the death of those *Dæmons*, which had the conduct of their oracles: Yet *Porphyry*, a known, and profess'd enemy of our Religion, ascribes it to the prevalence of this alone: "For since *Jesus* began to be worshipp'd, he says, no man has receiv'd any publick help from the Gods, but the cities are for many years over-run with diseases; *Æsculapius*, and the rest of the Gods having withdrawn their converse with Men." *

AND tho' 'tis very probable, he thought this subduction of themselves, was not the effect of force, but choice; and that perhaps, as a punishment for the wickedness of the people, in following after their new admired *Jesus*; yet the Christians of those ages gave sufficient evidence, that they were forced from their Temples, and oracular recesses by this very *Jesus* only.

FOR they prov'd to the peoples senses, that the Gods they worshipp'd, were Devils; and therefore their oracles, delusions; and this they made the Devils themselves confess, and that even in the presence of their own votaries.

THE antient writers speak of this, as a thing frequent, and well-known: *Tertullian* mentions it in his apology for the Christian Religion; and offers the *Roman* governours at any time to make the experiment at the hazard of every Christian's life, that could not do the same before their eyes; *Let any one*, says he, *be brought of those whom you think inspir'd by God, be it the God, that promises you rain, or Æsculapius, your Physician, if he dare to lye before a Christian, or if, being ask'd, he does not confess himself to be a Devil, let the Christian lose his life for his presumption.* †

THE like challenge we have in another writer: *Believe your own Gods*, says he, *or if you will, believe yourself.*—*You yourself shall see those very beings, whom you look upon, and reverence, as Lords, stand trembling under our hand as Captives:—You shall see and hear them betraying themselves to us, telling us, what they are, as soon we shall ask the question, not able, even in your own presence, to conceal their fallacies, and delusions from us.* ||

A LIKE instance to these we read in *Lactantius*, who delivers his challenge in the like pompous manner, *If you set*, says he, *here a man before us, who appears to be possess'd with a Devil, and a Priest of the Delphick Apollo with him, they shall be both equally frighted at the name of God, and both make equal haste*

* Euseb. Præp. Evang. l. 5. c. 1.

† Ter. Apol. c. 23.

Cypr. Epist. ad Demet. Sec. 12.

*to be gone; Apollo out of his Priest, and the spirit out of the Dæmoniack; and the God of the Priest being put to flight, the Oracle shall cease for ever. ** Burnett.

THESE appeals of the Christians are of so much the greater weight, as they are address'd to adversaries, who, as they could make experiment every moment, and would be sure to make the utmost advantage of it, to the shame of the Christians, if it were false; so the Christians would not have dared to put the credit of their Religion upon such an uncertain foot, if the fact had not been notoriously true; and had it not been well-known, even to their enemies, that they could, and had often done, what they pretended in these appeals to do.

AND if these things were so as history reports them, what greater proof could there be given of the falshood of the Heathen Gods, and worship, and the oracles, that supported them; than to see the latter struck dumb at the appearance of Christianity; and the Gods, whom they believ'd to give answers by them, prov'd to their very senses to be only evil spirits, subject to the power of the meanest Christian? And what greater proof could there be of the authority of the Christian Revelation?

ONE would think such an evidence of the power of God should not be capable of resistance; and that all people should immediately have submitted to it, and accordingly we read of the vast success it had:

BUT how reasonable soever it may be to expect this effect, yet considering the prejudices of education, and the arts of cunning Men, the power of interest, and the force of laws, and punishments to discourage innovations, this must meet with great difficulties at first; and it would require, as I said before, a great, and uncommon zeal in the first Preachers of this new Religion, to undertake so hard a work, a great and more than ordinary resolution, and courage to venture out upon so much danger; and an unparallel'd patience and resignation to bear up under so much opposition, that would be made against them, and the punishments that would naturally be inflicted on them.

THIS I observed already was another qualification of such a Revelation, as should come to reform the Religion, and root out the Idolatry of the Heathen World.

AND this likewise was so remarkable in the first preachers of Christianity, that they seem'd regardless of every thing, but the glory of God, and the salvation of Mankind: They left all they had for the sake of the Gospel, which tho' it was but little, it was their All; and were content to travel from city to city, from country to country, without acquaintance, and without friends, and without the necessary supports of life; depending entirely upon the providence of God, that he who had sent them upon this errand, would graciously supply them with what was convenient.

AND tho' they knew beforehand what reception they must meet with from a wicked and ungrateful World, tho' they knew that *in this World they must have tribulation, that Men would deliver them to be afflicted, and kill them, and that they should be hated of all men for the sake of Christ, who had foretold them, that the time would come, that they who shall put them to death, would think, they did God service by it, yet they were not discouraged by this prospect.*

AND tho' they found all this true by experience; *even to this hour, says St. Paul, we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and have no certain dwelling place, and labour with our hands, being revil'd, persecuted, and defam'd, and made the filth and off-scouring of all things unto this day: Tho' this was their sad condition of life, yet they behav'd themselves with great patience under it; being revil'd we bless, being persecuted we suffer it, and being defam'd we intreat,* says St. Paul.

How great soever their ill treatment was, and however terrible their sufferings; yet they were so far from being frighted with, or murmuring at them, that they look'd upon them as a privilege. When they were beaten, they departed rejoicing, *that they were thought worthy to suffer for the name of Christ, and they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, counting all things but loss, for*

* *Laet. l. 4. c. 27.*

Burnett. the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus their Lord, for whom they suffer'd the loss of all things.

SUCH were the first preachers of the Gospel Revelation, and such the noble spirit, by which it was carried on; a spirit that seems to have something, more than human in it.

WE see nothing like this in human Nature: All Men are apt to shrink away from difficulties, and naturally afraid of dangers, especially where necessity does not force them to them; and whatever other things they are capable of bearing, yet all are impatient of contempt: All evils, even death itself, are generally more tolerable than this:

AND yet we see these Men not only despising, but even rejoicing in this, and all other miseries, that they might be instrumental to the happiness of the World, even of those very persons, by whom they suffer'd.

THIS was such a spirit, as was never before heard of, nor has ever since been seen in any, but these persons, and their followers, who were act'd by the same principles, and engag'd in the same work with them.

AND if such a spirit was so necessary to the reformation of Idolatry, that in the nature of things it could not be expected without it, it is a strong confirmation of the Divinity of the Christian Revelation, that this spirit attended it in so eminent a degree, that it cannot reasonably be imputed to any other cause, but a divine power, and assistance only.

THUS have I done with the first part of my argument, and have demonstrated the agreement of the Christian Religion with all those foremention'd characters of a divine Revelation, which were necessary for the reformation of the notions of Mankind.

I COME now to consider the next thing to be reform'd, which could not be done without a Revelation, *viz.* their manners: And as I have before shewn, what characters were necessary to such a Revelation; if these likewise agree to the Christian Religion, this must be the Revelation we inquire after.

NOW the first character of such a Revelation, as was necessary to reform the manners of the World, is, that it give them a perfect rule of life, built upon the authority of God, and enforced by the example of the teachers of it.

AND this appears very eminently in the Gospel, and that not only, as it proposes to us the pure, and holy Nature of God, as the rule of our imitation, directing us to be holy, as he is holy, and perfect, as our Father in Heaven is perfect; but also, as it prescribes the best, and most natural methods to make us so; teaching us not only to live *soberly, righteously, and godly*, but *to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness, both of flesh and spirit.*

AND in order to this, as it gives us a general transcript of our duty to God, our Neighbour, and Ourselves; so it forbids us every irregular passion, every vicious inclination, every unclean desire, and directs us to *bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.*

'TIS true indeed, we have not every duty, and every sin particularly named to us, but we are taught such topicks to reason from, by which we may be led to the knowledge of them.

FOR as we are commanded *to love God with all our heart, and to glorify him with our bodies, and with our spirits, which are his*, we are hereby commanded every thing that is a natural expression of this Love, and every thing, whereby the perfections of the divine Nature can be display'd, and his honour advanc'd by us.

So likewise, as we are commanded *to love one another, as we love ourselves*; and to shew this by *doing to others, as we would they should do unto us*; so this must shew itself differently according to our different relations: And by consequence, whatever relations we can be consider'd under, we are hereby oblig'd to all those duties, which those relations naturally require of us.

AND with all this 'tis requir'd of us, that whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are virtu-

ous, lovely, and of good report, these we should study and endeavour after. *Burnett.* And sure there is nothing fit for a reasonable Man to do, but what is comprehended under one, or other of these considerations.

BUT to carry this still higher, we are farther taught to do every thing in the most eminent, and exemplary manner, that as we know better than other people, we should *do more*, than they; letting our *light shine, that they seeing our good works, should glorify our father, which is in heaven*: Nay, we are not only required to exceed others, who have not the same light with us, but we are to *study to excel* even one another: So that as we stand in various relations, which naturally require various duties of us; so we must endeavour to excel one another in those duties, studying who shall be the best governor and subject, the best husband and wife, the best parent and child, the best master and servant, the best friend to his friend, both in doing and returning, not only the best acts of these duties, but in the best, and most laudable manner; striving who shall be first in the Christian race, and all running with such zeal to exceed all others, as if one only were to gain the prize.

AND to make this still the more perfect, whatever is press'd upon us, as a duty, is not, as the Heathen morality was, from the consideration of convenience, prudence, profit, pleasure, decency, or reputation, but as the will of God.

FOR tho' tis true, there is no duty commanded in the Gospel, but what is really for our advantage, and no sin forbid, but what is hurtful to us in one or other of these respects; yet this is not to be the prime motive of our obedience, nor is this to be the foot, upon which we are to act, but we are to do all for the love, and to the glory of God, and in obedience to the will, and authority of God.

THIS is the Gospel rule of life, than which nothing can be conceiv'd more full, and compleat in all respects.

BUT how perfect soever this rule of the Christian life is, it was not likely to gain upon a wicked World, unless enforced by the examples of those that taught it; for the World would never think they believed what they taught, whilst their lives were a contradiction to their doctrines.

AS therefore an exemplary life was a circumstance necessary to the reformation of the World; so this was what the first preachers of the Gospel were particularly distinguish'd by.

OUR Saviour Christ is said to have lived without sin, and not only to have appeal'd to the consciences of his adversaries, whether they could convince him of any, but to have been acquitted even by his Judge, as having no fault to be found in him, even then, when he condemn'd him, as a malefactor.

HIS life, as it is set before us, was one continued course of the most substantial, and most excellent virtues, a life of singular piety, and charity, justice, meekness, humility, self-denial, contentedness, patience and contempt of the World: And as he left his Disciples this example, that they should tread in his steps; so we read how carefully his Apostles copied after it; insomuch they excite others to follow them, as they follow'd him.

THEY appeal to God and the World, for their good conversation in Christ Jesus: *Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, how justly, how unblameably we behaved ourselves among you: We have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by the manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every Man's conscience in the sight of God,* 1 Theff. ii. 10.

AND this they make their comfort in their afflictions, *that in simplicity and godly sincerity they have had their conversation in the world*: This account indeed we have only in the *New Testament*, but it is not denied by the adversaries of Christianity, who doubtless would not have overlook'd the smallest pretence for reflection, had there been the least handle for it.

AND whilst Christianity was thus recommended by such illustrious examples, this must naturally tend to the reformation of the World, so far as their light and influence could reach; for by this they demonstrated, that the things they

Burnett. taught, were not mere speculative but practical truths, not intended only to amuse, and entertain the mind, but to regulate and amend the life; and that they were not beyond the reach of human Nature, when they themselves lead the way before them, and that too in the highest, and most exalted degrees even of the most difficult, and discouraging duties, of patience, self-denial, and contempt of the World: And this must naturally shew what their intention was, and that they could have no other design upon Mankind, but to make them truly good and happy.

BUT whatever advantage Christianity might receive from the exemplary lives of the first teachers of it; yet as they preach'd to a World over-run with wickedness, there could be no hope of reformation, as I have shewn, without some assurance of pardon, and reconciliation.

AND this is another character of a divine revelation so remarkable in Christianity, that the very end of our Saviour's coming into the World was *to save sinners, to seek and to save that which was lost*; and the whole Gospel is nothing, but a declaration of the mercy of God to them, and the means by which it was to be attain'd by them. And as the reformation of the World is the design and reason of the Revelation; and therefore we must in reason expect, that the mercy offer'd in such a Revelation, must be in such a way, as is suitable to this end; and by consequence not to give the least encouragement to sin; so we find this particularly taken care of in the Christian method of reconciliation with God, where the means propos'd for this end are such, as not only tend to convince us of the highest love of God to sinners, but at the same time to shew us the heinous nature, and raise in us the utmost abhorrence, of sin.

FOR it teaches us that God is a holy Being, that *hates iniquity and loves righteousness*; but nevertheless that he so loves the World, that *he is not willing that any should perish*. And to prevent this, he offers them pardon upon their repentance, that is, upon condition that they part with their sins, and become new Creatures, *turning from the wickedness that they have committed, and doing that which is lawful and right*.

AND tho' God is represented upon such a repentance, to be as ready to receive us into the embraces of his mercy, as a tender and compassionate father is to receive his penitent, tho' prodigal son; yet we are taught, that even this repentance shall not be accepted, but thro' the sacrifice of the death of Christ; thereby to convince us of the necessity of forsaking all sin, when the pardon of it could not be procur'd, but at so great and inestimable a price.

THIS sacrifice Jesus Christ has offer'd for us, voluntarily laying down his life, which, tho' it was in one respect, as a confirmation of his mission; yet it was also done, as an expiation for us. And as God laid on him the iniquities of us all, so he has declar'd his acceptance of his blood, as a propitiation for the sins of the whole World; so that if they will but do their part *in turning from the wickedness which they have committed, and doing that which is lawful and right*, (there needs no more sacrifice for sin) *they shall save their souls alive*.

AND to assure us of his acceptance of the death of Christ, he not only rais'd him from the dead, and has given us a privilege upon our repentance, to plead the merit of his sacrifice for us, as a price paid to him for our redemption; but he has also taken him into Heaven, *and set him at his own right hand, where he ever lives to make intercession for us*; and he has given him *all power, both in heaven and in earth*, that we may rest satisfied, that *he is able to save to the uttermost those, that come unto God by him*.

THIS is the Gospel Scheme of Reconciliation, and this we see, is so wonderfully contriv'd, as to shew the greatest love to sinners, and yet the severest indignation against sin: It gives us the most comfortable assurance of pardon, and yet the greatest discouragement to disobedience. And the condition on which this pardon is offer'd is such, as is not only so reasonable in itself, that no reconciliation ought to be had without it, but also so necessary, that in the nature of things no reconciliation can be had without it: So that at the same time that it

offers pardon to the World, to invite them to reform their lives, it does it in such a way, as to put them under the strongest obligation to it. Burnett.

So that the Christian Religion ought not only to be esteem'd a divine Revelation, as it agrees with this general character of such a Revelation; that it proposes a means of reconciliation to sinners, in order to their reformation; but also that the scheme itself is so wonderfully contriv'd, as to shew the divine hand that form'd it.

BUT the wisdom of this contrivance will be still more remarkable, if we add one consideration more, *viz.* that this method of reconciliation propos'd in the Gospel, was particularly suited to the notions of Mankind; and was fitted not only to the reformation of their manners, but also their idolatrous, and barbarous worship.

ALL the World had a notion of the necessity of an expiation by sacrifice, in order to the reconciliation of God to sinners: No age, nor nation has been without it, that history informs us of: And as they knew no rule to regulate their expiations by, but the nature of their sins, which might reasonably be suppos'd to require different, and greater atonements, according to their different degrees of guilt; so this not only begat a very costly, and burthensome worship, and expos'd Men to great abuses from their Priests, who had the sole direction of it; but it also produced a savage practice, even in the most civiliz'd countries, of sacrificing Men, Women, and Children, and that too in prodigious multitudes at a time; imagining that the dignity of human Nature, and the innocence, and purity of Children, would be of so much the greater efficacy to their purpose.

Now, as we are all convinced of the barbarity of this, and of the necessity of the abolition of it; it is a great instance of the wisdom of this scheme of reconciliation; that it not only proposes pardon in such a way, as is agreeable to this general notion of the World, by a sacrifice of expiation for their sins; but also such a sacrifice, as must render all others needless, and oblige them to lay them all aside: This expiation being wrought by such a person, of such perfect purity, and so high a dignity, as to be sufficient for the sins of the whole World: So that after this all sacrifices, both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, were, in their own nature, abolish'd and done away, as serving to no end, or purpose; *the Son of God*, having by *this one sacrifice of himself once offer'd, perfected for ever those, that are sanctified, and obtain'd eternal redemption for us.*

IF this scheme be liable to objection, that this expiation is wrought by the sacrifice of the Son of God, and that 'tis strange, that God should suffer his Son to die;

THIS, we must confess, is a great mystery: But the difficulty of this does not seem to lie in the Death, so much as in the Incarnation of the Son: For if we can conceive, that God might condescend to have a person born in our Nature, in such a manner, as to be his own production, truly, and properly his Son: And if there be any reason, that we can discover (and we can discover many great, and wise ones) why he should live in a human way; there is no difficulty in supposing, that God might permit him to be put to death; and that, not only because this likewise might serve many wise ends, but because he might be capable of a recompence for it.

AND if there might be wise reasons for his death, it is easily conceivable, that he might voluntarily choose, and agree to this, in order to those ends to be serv'd by it; and that God might accept of that voluntary suffering, as a sacrifice for the sins of the World. This carries nothing shocking to my apprehension; and there is nothing, but what is easy, and intelligible in it.

AND yet this is the Gospel notion of it: For the *New Testament* seems to set it forth, as the contrivance of God the Father, declar'd to his Son, in his pre-existent state; that in order to the redemption of Mankind, he should take human nature upon him; and the Son is represented, as voluntarily submitting to his Father's will, in these words, which are applied to Jesus Christ by the Apostle, *Sacrifice and burnt-offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou prepar'd me: Lo! I come to do thy will, O God; yea I am content to do it, thy law is within my heart.* AND

Burnett. AND as in this body he came, and made himself of no reputation, but died the death of a slave; so God has highly exalted him in that very Nature, in which he suffer'd; and has not only declar'd, that he will accept of his death, as a price paid for our redemption; but that no one shall be accepted by him, but in, and thro' his intercession for us.

WHY God should think fit to be reconciled to the World in this way, rather than any other, we are not concern'd to enquire; but even we are able, as I said, to see several wise ends of providence it might serve.

BUT whatever the reason of this dispensation was, 'tis enough for us, that it was so: If we have sufficient proof of the Christian Revelation, we are to take our Religion, as it is reveal'd: And as it is sufficient for us, that it was the will of God, that we should be saved in this way; it will be great presumption, and folly, in any one to boggle at Christianity upon the account of this difficulty, when we know 'tis reveal'd by God; because we poor ignorant Creatures think, that God might have pardon'd us without it, and are not able to find out all the reasons, why he chose, rather to do it thus.

THUS have I done with this character of a divine Revelation, relating to the declaration of pardon of Sin.

THE next thing requir'd in a divine Revelation is the assurance of assistance, and acceptance; and this is so evident throughout the *New Testament*, that he that runs may read it.

WE have there the promise of a divine assistance by the communication of his Spirit to us; which, as it came down, as I shall shew hereafter, upon the first preachers of the Gospel, in an eminent and extraordinary manner to lead them into all truth, and enable them to teach that truth to others; so this same Spirit *shall abide with us for ever, to work in us both to will, and to do according to his good pleasure.*

AND as this assistance is promis'd upon the easy condition of asking it of God, with an honest desire to make a due improvement of it; so our Saviour tells us, that in such a case God will be as ready to answer our prayer, as a Father is to give bread to his hungry Child, who, when he asks bread, will not give him a stone.

THIS is the assurance we Christians have, and this the assistance we may rely upon: And when this holy Spirit is set forth to us, as a divine person of almighty power, this is a vast encouragement to set about a reformation, when we know, let our difficulties be what they will, we may *be more than conquerors, thro' him that strengthens us.*

AND when we are further told, on the other hand, that how powerful soever this assistant is, yet we must not expect, he will do all for us; but only that he will help our weak endeavours, when we do what we can for ourselves: That if we resist his motions, he will leave us; and if we do not improve the aid he gives us, it shall be withdrawn from us; this gives no encouragement to vain presumption, but is a strong motive to take heed to ourselves, that we *receive not the grace of God in vain, and work out our own salvation with fear and trembling.*

THIS is the Gospel promise of assistance, and this is all that is consistent with a rational Nature:

BUT yet notwithstanding this wise provision; because thro' the weakness of our mortal Nature, we cannot always stand upright, but *in many things we shall offend all*; that we should not be dishearten'd by our daily failings, and so be tempted to despair of success, we have a further gracious assurance given us, that God will not be *extreme to mark what is done amiss.*

THO' he requires the most perfect obedience of us, as what we are to endeavour after; and for that reason has given us the most perfect rule to walk by, and the most perfect pattern to copy after; yet it is a sincere obedience only, that is made the condition of our salvation.

IT is impossible for us to attain intire perfection in this World; *there is no one that lives and sinneth not*: But if we be sincere in our endeavours, we shall not,

not, and if we hope for salvation, we must not allow ourselves in any sin; but *Burnett.* as we must do all we can against it, in the utmost watchfulness, humility, and suspicion of ourselves, and daily prayer for God's assistance; so this is all that is requir'd of us: And tho' we are not as good as we shou'd be; yet if we labour sincerely to be as good as we can, *our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord.*

AND what can there be wanting in this respect to invite a wicked World to repent, and amend, that the Christian Revelation has not here propos'd to them?

BUT yet that nothing might be omitted whereby it was possible to work upon them, and in a human way persuade them to reform, and betake themselves to a better life; we have

Lastly, ANOTHER consideration added; which is another character, of a divine Revelation, the assurance of a future state: And that too laid open in the plainest and the fullest manner, with such particular circumstances, and under such affecting representations, as are best fitted to the end of reformation.

WE are told in general, that as *it is appointed for all Men once to die*; so after that there will come a judgment, when *we shall all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, who is appointed judge of quick and dead, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to what he hath done, whether good, or evil.*

AND in order to this, that we may have our whole Nature, and therefore may appear before him in our bodies as well as souls, *the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be rais'd*: And *they who shall be found alive, shall be chang'd, and caught up into the air to meet their Redeemer in the clouds, who shall come in the glory of his Father, with the holy Angels, and then shall sit upon the throne of his glory.*

WHAT can there be more awful, and grand than this? What can be more reasonable, than that Jesus Christ should be thus glorified, who was so ignominiously treated, and crucified? That he, who has promis'd salvation to us, should actually confer it on us? What more gracious, and condescending in God, than that Man should be judg'd by Man; and that he should be our Judge, who is our Brother, and Mediator, *touch'd with the feeling of our infirmities, sin only excepted.*

BEFORE him therefore we must stand in judgment, all nations far and near, *all the dead, both small, and great, and the books shall be open'd, and we shall be judg'd out of those books*: And as *there is nothing cover'd which shall not be reveal'd, and nothing hid, that shall not be known*; so there is nothing, which shall not receive a just recompence of reward, suitable to its Nature, whether good, or evil.

To those who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, honour, and immortality, shall be given eternal life. A reward worthy of God, who, as he is eternal, rewards like himself with Eternity.

AND this reward is set forth to us, under such ideas, as are most likely to invite our hope, and excite us to endeavour after it.

THERE is nothing more desireable than life; and one would think there is nothing should so forcibly work upon human Nature, as the hopes of everlasting life. And yet to give it more weight, this promise is made with the addition of every thing, that can make such a life a blessing. It is set forth to us by all such things, as we are commonly most affected with; as a Crown, a Kingdom, a Treasure, and Inheritance, undefiled, that fadeth not away, and a state of everlasting joy and pleasure.

AND whereas our bodies shall be rais'd again, even those shall be chang'd; and by the power of him, who *is able to subdue all things to himself*, shall be fashion'd into spiritual, powerful, glorious, incorruptible and immortal bodies.

AND to make this more effectual to our reformation, this happy state is not only represented, as the reward of our obedience; but our obedience is required as the condition upon which, and which only it can be attain'd.

AND to convince us of the reasonableness of this condition, it is not impos'd upon us arbitrarily, merely because God will have it so, but only, because it can't

Burnett. be otherwise; this condition being, in the nature of things, so necessary to our happiness, that it is impossible to be happy without it.

THIS is the Gospel account of a future state of happiness, which is to be the portion of true Christians; and in this we see nothing mean, and frivolous, nothing vain and frothy, like the romantick fictions of the Poets; but the whole is solid, and substantial, the ideas great, and noble, agreeable to the nature of God, and Man.

AND as this Religion thus provides for the happiness of the good, so it has taught us likewise what will be the portion of the bad; that, as *the righteous shall have life eternal*; so the *wicked shall have indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, and that too, both in body and soul in hell, in everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord.*

AND as this is intended for the reformation of the World, there is nothing can be imagin'd more proper for that end, than this: For what can work upon Mankind, if this will not? Our very Nature starts, and draws back from misery, and how must we be affected with the assurance of misery everlasting? *If we fear those, that can kill the body, how much more should we fear him, who can destroy both body and soul in hell?*

BUT that this might take the faster hold of us, and work more effectually upon us, this misery is set forth to us under such representations, as are most terrible, and affrightning to human Nature: By *a worm, that will never dye*: by *a fire that will never be quench'd*: By a thirst, that will never be allay'd.

AND lest all this should be imagin'd only an artful contrivance to awe Mankind into obedience, 'tis worth our observation, that the misery here threaten'd is founded in Nature, and these similitudes have a natural suitableness in them to the thing they are intended to represent.

AS for the misery here threaten'd to sin, 'tis such as naturally arises from it: For as our happiness consists in the enjoyment of God; so by being banish'd from God, we must be miserable; and yet this is the natural consequence of sin: For sin is a contradiction to holiness; and a sinful Nature, and a holy God are as irreconcilable, as light and darkness: And whilst a sinner continues in this opposition to God, there must be a perpetual separation between them, and 'tis impossible but he must be miserable.

AND when he comes to find himself irrecoverably lost, as his conscience will gaul him with the inward torment of bitter and sad reflections, this is very lively express'd by the similitude of a *worm, that dieth not*; this being a torment that works within him, like a worm gnawing at the heart.

AND as every one has a natural desire of happiness, which can never be separated from us, but will be always pushing itself forth, so long as we have a being; so when the sinner shall find himself in misery, impatiently desiring happiness, and yet under an utter incapacity of attaining it; this is very naturally represented by a fire, tormenting him with burning heat, like a Man in a fever parch'd with thirst, and yet not able to procure a drop of water to cool his tongue.

SO that as nothing can be more certain from the nature of things, than the punishment here threaten'd to sin; so there is nothing can be more just, and natural, than those ideas it is represented under.

IF any difficulty arises in our minds, that this punishment is said to be everlasting; as seeming inconsistent with the goodness, and justice of God to punish finite sins with everlasting sufferings, we may consider,

First, THAT this suffering is founded in the nature of things, and is not properly an act of God, but the natural effect of a natural cause: And when this suffering is threaten'd by God, as a punishment, 'tis really nothing more, than a fore-warning to sinners of what will be the consequence of their folly, and what their sins will naturally bring upon them: This he does out of mere goodness to prevent their ruin.

AND if Men will not regard his admonition, but notwithstanding all his promises of assistance to our weakness, his acceptance of our sincerity, and the

vast recompence of reward, he has laid up for us, will, in spite of all, pursue *Burnett.* their own wills, they have no reason to complain, that they are miserable: It cannot be otherwise without a Miracle: And we have no more reason to expect that the goodness of God should work Miracles to prevent our misery in this case, than that he should do it every moment of our lives to prevent all the effects of other natural causes that are mischievous, and hurtful to us.

BUT if we *secondly* consider this suffering, as a punishment, how terrible soever it is in itself, there is nothing inconsistent with the goodness, or justice of God in it.

FOR as Man is a rational Creature, capable of laws, we may reasonably expect from the goodness of God, that he will give us such laws, as are for our happiness: And as laws must be enforced by rewards and punishments; those punishments are most suitable to the goodness of God, as a wise and holy law-giver, which are best fitted to produce obedience, and thereby to make us happy: And therefore the right and just proportion of punishment to be annex'd to laws, is not to be measur'd by the nature of sin, but by the suitability of it to the end, it is intended for; which is the prevention of sin; and by consequence that must be the right and just measure of punishment, which is best fitted for this purpose:

AND since 'tis plain to every one's observation, that the threatening of everlasting misery is not more, than enough for this purpose; because Men will not be wrought into obedience, even by this, it will hence follow, that the goodness of God (consider'd as under the direction of wisdom and holiness) could not have appear'd so conspicuously in any less punishment than this.

AND if it be goodness in God to threaten such punishments, thereby to fright Men into happiness, it cannot be inconsistent with his goodness, or justice to execute those punishments; so long as there are any beings capable of sinning, which that execution may be a terror to: And since the Gospel tells us, that Angels, and good Men shall live for ever; who, as they are free Beings, will, as such, be always naturally capable of sinning; and therefore will stand in need of proper motives to obedience, to preserve them innocent and happy, it will follow, that there will be always reason for the execution of these punishments; because there will be always free agents to be terrified from sin, and preserv'd in obedience, and happiness by them.

THESE reasonings seem plainly to demonstrate to us the necessity of everlasting punishments in the nature of things: So that, tho' the word *everlasting* is in Scripture meant, sometimes only of an indeterminate duration, which may be capable of an end; yet from these arguments it seems more reasonable to understand it here in the strictest sense, for a duration without end.

BUT be that as it will, in whatever sense we understand the word, it carries in it an awful consideration to awaken sinners to repentance; and nothing less than this could have been sufficient to rouse the unthinking World out of that stupid insensibility, they were fallen into before Christianity appear'd, and out of which they were to be deliver'd.

AND 'tis a great addition to the credibility of the Christian Revelation, that it not only reveals to us a future state; but that the account, it gives us of it, is such, as is founden in the nature of things, and wisely fitted to the only end, for which such a Revelation was wanted, *viz.* the reformation of the World.

BUT how credible soever it may be in this respect, yet all this would signify but little; unless it were attended with another character of a divine Revelation, and that is, the power of Miracles.

THIS power, as now I have already observ'd, appear'd in a wonderful and amazing manner, both in our Saviour and his Apostles, who did such works in confirmation of their Mission, as were abundantly sufficient to demonstrate to the World, that they were teachers sent from God; and that all which they taught was true: And by consequence, that the rules they prescrib'd, were the will of God; and the assurance they gave of pardon, and reconciliation; assistance, and acceptance; and a future state might be rested on, as the Revelation of God.

THIS

Burnett. THIS general evidence of a divine power attending them, was sufficient for this purpose: But that there might be nothing wanting to fix our faith, and give us the utmost satisfaction we are capable of; we read of some particular Miracles wrought for the confirmation of some of the more important articles. Thus for instance,

As our Saviour Christ came into the World to save sinners, that is, to reform the World; and as the first step to a reformation is repentance; and the first motive to repentance is the hope of pardon; so he was not content to put the belief, and assurance of this pardon, upon the general credit of his other Miracles only; but we read of a Miracle particularly wrought to shew, that he was able to procure this pardon, that *he had power on earth to forgive sins.*

AND as he laid down his life as a sacrifice for sin, that *in him we might have Redemption thro' his blood*, so, that we might be sure of God's accepting his sacrifice for us, he rose again from the dead, as a testimony of it.

AND as he had given us the assurance of a future state, wherein we should live again in our bodies, by a resurrection from the dead; he gave an instance of the possibility, and certainty of this by his own resurrection.

BUT because his resurrection was only a rising to a life in this World; and could not therefore in its own nature be a proof of another; and because the happiness of a Christian is to be in heaven, that we might have evident proof of such a place, he miraculously ascended thither.

HE had before told his Disciples, that *in his father's house are many mansions*, and that he would *go to prepare a place for them*, and as he took them out with him in open day, to make them eye witnesses of his Ascension; so, that they might not doubt of his being in heaven, they had not only the testimony of Angels for it, to give them assurance of his going thither; but he also sent the Holy Ghost upon his Apostles, to shew his high power there: That, whereas they were chosen to be *Witnesses* of him, and to *preach the Gospel to all nations*, they might be endued with the gift of Languages, and all other gifts and powers that were necessary for the work, they were chosen for, and appointed to.

AND these gifts, and powers they so display'd, in a manner so extraordinary, surprizing, and convincing, that, tho' they were but twelve poor Men, ignorant and uneducated, *the scorn and off-scouring of the world*; yet these *foolish things confounded the wise*, and *the mighty*, and brought to nought the things that were; that is, they baffled the wisdom of the learned, and defeated the opposition of the mighty, and in spite of all the arts of the former, and the persecutions of the latter, they overthrew all the establish'd Religions of the World, abolishing the legal ceremonies of the *Jews*, and rooting out all the superstitions of the *Gentiles*; not only turning them from darkness to light, but from the power of Satan unto God: That is, they did what a Revelation was wanted for, and what the Christian Revelation was intended for; they reformed Mankind where-ever they came.

THUS we see the nature and evidence of Christianity, what the design of it was, and what necessity there was for it, in order to the reformation and happiness of the World; and how it furnishes us with all things necessary for this reformation, and agrees with all the characters of such a Revelation, as might reasonably be expected from God. We see here a regular consistent scheme:

BUT there is one thing to be particularly observed in this place, which is a wonderful confirmation of it, namely, that it is the very scheme of Providence before demonstrated from the nature and reason of things.

FOR we have already shewn, that the general end of the government of Mankind, is, to bring them to everlasting happiness, both in body and soul, by a resurrection from the dead: And in order to this happiness to restore them to their natural and moral perfection, in which they were originally made.

AND in order to this perfection we have likewise shewn, that God will furnish their understandings with necessary knowledge; and their wills with proper motives; and then leave them to their liberty.

AND

AND if they cannot attain to perfection of themselves, in a natural way, he *Burnett.* will vouchsafe a supernatural assistance which shall be proportion'd according to their necessities, and continued according to their improvements.

AND as on the one hand, if they make proper use of this assistance ; and endeavour to be as perfect as they are capable of being here ; we have shewn, that God will fill up what is wanting of perfection hereafter, when this corruption shall put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality, and the spirits of the just shall be made perfect ;

So on the other hand we have likewise shewn, that if Men neglect the use of this assistance, and disregard the means of perfection here ; they will be left in a state of imperfection, and everlasting unhappiness hereafter.

THIS is the notion of providence, I have before demonstrated ; and every one that knows Christianity, knows this to be the very scheme deliver'd there.

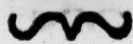
AND if it be true, as we have likewise before shewn ; that notwithstanding all the means of instruction, and motives to practice, that God may at any time have given Mankind ; he may yet be further dispos'd to do them good, according to their different necessities, and capacities ; and by consequence, if they have been, or shall be in want of a Revelation, that he has, or will, in his good time, vouchsafe such a Revelation to them : If, I say, this be true, as has before been shewn, then, since it has been already prov'd, that the World was in such an apparent necessity of a Revelation, in order to the reformation of it, that they could not possibly be happy without it ; and that no Revelation could be sufficient for their reformation, but such, as should be attended with those several characters, which have been already taken notice of, all which Christianity punctually agrees withal ; we may hence conclude, with great assurance, that Christianity must of necessity be a true Revelation ; and by consequence the true Religion, which was what I propos'd to enquire after, and regularly demonstrate to you.

AND since the proof that I have all along given of it, has been drawn from the natures and reasons of things ; and the natural notions we have of God, consider'd as the Creator, and Governor of the World ; if there should be any objections rais'd in your Mind, from the relation that Christianity bears to the *Old Testament*, and the difficulty that some pretend there is, in understanding the prophecies there, and making out the correspondence of Christianity with them, you need not perplex your thoughts about them.

YOU have already seen Christianity is true by its own internal evidence without regard to the *Old Testament* ; and would have been so, had it never been written, and will be so, tho' those books should happen to be lost.

BUT I nevertheless hope to demonstrate to you, in the course of my following reasonings, that Christianity has sufficient evidence of its truth, from the relation it bears to that book.

AND as I have shewn the credibility of that book in general, I will now proceed to examine it particularly, and shall endeavour not only to demonstrate to you the credibility of the several relations there ; but also such a relation between them, and Christianity, that if the history of the Facts be true, Christianity cannot possibly be false.



THE
DEMONSTRATION
OF
TRUE RELIGION
FROM THE
SCRIPTURES.

P R E F A C E.

IN the foregoing Treatise I have led the Reader on, thro' a long Chain of Reasoning, to the Christian Religion, from the natural Notions of God, and His Providence: From whence, I think, it sufficiently appears, that, if we believe the one (as I have shewn, we have abundant Reason to do) we shall have no room left to doubt the other.

I shall now carry on the same Chain in another Branch, which will conduct us to the same Point: And as I before consider'd the Nature of Providence, and the natural Design and Method of it, I will now take a View of the History of it, as we have it deliver'd in the Scriptures, and how it suits with the foregoing Scheme.

The Credibility of this History, I shall endeavour to establish from the Matter contain'd in it, by shewing, That the Circumstances Mankind are here said to have fallen into at different Times, are such, as requir'd such different Methods of Providence, as this History reports to have happen'd.

This Method will give the Reader a general Key to the whole Book, as it will shew him the Reason of every Part of it.

He will see a Design laid from the Beginning, and the Suitableness of all the several Steps of Providence to it, which we read of in the Patriarchal, and Mosaic Dispensations: He will see the Reason and Wisdom of the Jewish Commonwealth and Law, and the Necessity afterwards of their Dissolution; as likewise the Necessity of various Prophecies, and the Nature of them, and the Reason afterwards of their Cessation: And lastly, Such a Connexion of the whole with Christianity, as will shew, that this was the Great Point in view thro'out, in which the several Parts were to unite, and centre.

Something of this Nature has been long wish'd for, and, if rightly managed, would, in the Judgment of a very learned Prelate*, make one of the best Commentaries on the Old Testament Scriptures in the World: But it has never yet been attempted by any, that I know of.

What I have done towards this, I am sensible is very imperfect; yet this is very excusable in the first Essay of this Nature: But how short soever I may fall of my Design, I hope there will this Advantage, at least arise from it, That what I have done will set some abler Pen upon the Work, that we may one Day see it set in a perfect Light, to the Honour of God, and the Edifying of His People.

* Dr. Williams, Bishop of Chichester, in his 4th Sermon preach'd at Mr. Boyle's Lecture for the Year 1695. p. 18.

T H E
D E M O N S T R A T I O N
O F
T R U E R E L I G I O N, &c.

C H A P. I.

The Credibility of the Scripture History.

FOR the more easy apprehension of the Connexion between this, and the foregoing treatise, I am obliged to repeat something of what I have before said.

As I there gave the reader a general view of the design and method of the Divine Providence in the Government of the World, demonstrated from the natures and reasons of things; from hence I inferred, That if there be any History of the Government of the World agreeing with these notions, so demonstrated, it must be so far esteem'd a Credible History.

Now such a History I have shewn we have in that Book, which we call the Scriptures; A Book written on purpose to give us a Knowledge of the various Circumstances of Mankind from time to time from the Creation, and of the various methods of God's dealing with them according to those Circumstances.

AND as in this Book the whole design of Providence is set forth to be what we had before demonstrated it must be, that of making the world Happy, by that only way of making them Holy.

AND since the Method for this purpose is represented to have been by various Revelations of proper laws and motives of Holiness, suitable to the different Circumstances of those they are said to be given to, and that not all at once, (as we have shewn they ought not to be) but *at sundry times, and in divers manners*, according as different occasions call'd for them, this is so far a rational and consistent History, and on this account it carries in it a general Credibility, not only of the History itself, but also of those Revelations contained in it, as being of such a Nature, and given for such an End, and in such a manner, as, according to our foregoing arguments, 'tis reasonable to expect they should be.

THUS far I went in the foregoing treatise in the proof of the Scripture History in general:

I COME now to consider it more particularly; and as it is a matter of the highest Importance, I propose to examine it step by step.

AND as it is, as I said, a History of Providence, and is plainly intended to let us into the Knowledge of the various dispensations of God towards Mankind; So, since the whole design of Providence is the Happiness of His creatures, according to their several Circumstances and capacities, I will consider what account this History gives us of Mankind; what Circumstances they are here said to have fallen into from time to time; and what methods of Providence we can reasonably think such Circumstances might stand in need of, and whether it informs us of any such provision made for them, as was suitable to those necessities: And if we find it answer in these particulars, we have all that is requisite in the nature of the thing, to demonstrate it a Consistent and Credible History.

IN

Burnett. IN order to this inquiry 'tis necessary, that I remind you of what I have already proved, That had the world continued in a State of Innocence, there could have been no other method of Providence necessary for its Happiness, but Preservation; because as every thing had a Nature suited to its End, by acting according to their respective natures, all things would naturally attain their ends.

AND therefore as it was Sin only that open'd the door and let in upon us all those various manifestations of the Divine Wisdom, Goodness and Power, that are necessary to the Government of the World, so as this History is apparently a History of Providence, it must naturally give us a History of Sin, of the Rise and Progress of it, and the several Methods that have been taken for the Happiness of the World, according to the different Circumstances that Sin has brought them into, and their Necessities have call'd for.

AND therefore as it is natural and necessary, that it should, as it apparently does, begin at the first Sin, if it gives us such an account of this Sin, of the nature and occasion, of the effects and consequences of it, and of such methods taken for the Happiness of the World, as the Nature of their case required, agreeable to the Nature and Reason of things, this must be a rational and credible account.

Now in order to judge of this distinctly, we will enquire what Reason can find out, and what light it can discover in these particulars, in order to compare it with this History.

THE first thing then we are to enquire into, is the Origin of Sin.

The Origin of Sin.

How Sin came into the World, has been a puzzling Question among the Philosophers of old, and the best way for Reason to resolve the difficulty, is, to inquire into the Time when it began.

THAT it was of early date, is very certain, by the Effects that are seen of it in all mankind;

FOR before Sin entered into the World, Human Nature was quite a different thing from what we find it now.

OUR first Parents, we have already shewn, were made in a State of Perfection, Happiness and Immortality.

BUT we are evidently in a State of Imperfection, in respect both of our Rational and Bodily Faculties; we have a great weakness in our Understandings, and a strange disorder in our Wills and Affections, and we have a woful Corruption in our lower Powers.

THERE is now no longer that just Proportion of Blood and Humours, nor that lasting Stability of Constitution in our Bodies, nor that Subjection of our Appetites and Passions to Reason, which we have shewn our first Parents were created with.

BUT on the contrary, there is too visibly a *Law in our Members, waging War against the Law in our Mind, the Flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the Flesh*; and we find ourselves, not only liable to sorrows and sicknesses, pains and diseases, but at last under an unavoidable necessity of Death.

So that there is evidently a change wrought upon our Natures, and as we are but too plainly sunk below that Perfection, our first Parents were created in, so this we have already prov'd to have arisen from Sin.

AND since 'tis likewise evident from History and Observation, that in all places of the World this depravation is the same, that all have the same moral disorder in their Faculties, and the same natural diseases and decays; As we may thence naturally conclude, that this depravation is something inherent in, and propagated with our Natures, and therefore must have been derived from that Common Stock from whence all Mankind derived their Natures; so, on the other hand, if it was the Effect of Sin, as we have before shewn it was, it must have been some Sin of our First Parents: And as they must have been depraved in their own Nature before any depravation could be imparted to their Children, this Sin, which was the cause of that depravation, must have been committed before they had Children.

THUS far the Case is clear, as to the First Sinner ;

Burnett.

BUT yet considering the State of Perfection our First Parents have been proved to be Created in, considering how well informed, I have shewn they were of the Nature of God, and their own Happiness, and the Means of attaining it, and the indispensable Connexion, and Dependance of their Happiness upon those Means, so as that they were sure never to be Happy without the Observation of them, the Question is, How they could be capable of falling into Sin ?

FOR tho' Man was in his own nature fallible, and in that respect capable of Transgression, yet there was nothing in his nature to incline him to it :

As he was made in a State of Perfection, His Will was, as we have shewn, made subject to His Understanding, and therefore that could not be the occasion of it, because He had no Will to do any thing, but as Reason should direct: The Body likewise, in its Perfect State, was equally subject to the Understanding, without any Irregularity in its Blood and Humours, without any Disorder in its Appetites, and Passions; so that this also could not carry him to any thing, but what his Understanding should approve.

AND therefore, since Man did fall from his Original Perfection, if it was owing to Himself, it would seem to have proceeded from some Error in his Understanding.

BUT this we have likewise prov'd, was made Perfect in its kind, and naturally capable of finding out Truth, so far as it lay within the compass of Reason :

AND therefore if the Understanding was mistaken, it must have been in something, that Reason could not perfectly comprehend :

BUT 'tis hard to conceive, how this could be. For that, which by being mistaken, could produce such sad effects in our Nature, was doubtless necessary to be known: And we have already shewn, that what was necessary to be known, and yet not knowable by Reason, was necessary to be made known by Revelation; and therefore we must conclude, that if the Sin of our First Parents was owing to any mistake of the Understanding, as that mistake must have been in something, that was above the reach of Reason, so it must have been in something, that had, either been commanded, or forbid by Revelation.

AND if so, then since there were Three things, as we have before shewn, requir'd a Revelation, even in a state of purity, the first relating to their Food, the other to Marriage, and Language, unless it shall appear, that there was any other Revelation, besides these, we must conclude, that the first Sin was committed thro' some mistake, relating to one, or other of these.

How this could be, is still hard to conceive. For the same necessity, that requir'd a Revelation to inform them, what they wanted to know, in order to their Happiness, did, in the reason of the thing, require that it should be such a Revelation, as they could not be mistaken in. And therefore whatever mistake they fell into relating to any Revelation they had receiv'd, it could not arise from any defect in the Revelation itself, or any Ignorance of what was pretended to be Reveal'd to them.

So that if they fell into Sin, thro' any default in their Understanding, in any thing relating to Revelation, it could be only for want of a due Exercise of it, that is, for want of a due Consideration :

BUT how they could be wanting in a due Consideration of what was necessary to be known, and what, by consequence, they must, in that State of Purity, have had a desire to know, is still hard to conceive :

AND therefore we must conclude it to be more probable, that as it could not arise from any want of Information, and as nothing in their own nature could tempt, or incline them to it, so they must have been drawn into it by something from without :

AND as 'tis evident it could not be from God, who, as a Being absolutely Perfect, cannot be the Author of Sin, we must conclude, that if there were any such Beings, as Evil Spirits, it must naturally have arisen from them.

THUS far, I think, Reason may go with certainty: But this is not all :

Burnett. IF we consider further what has been already prov'd, That the End, for which Mankind were made, and to which all their Operations were directed, was Happiness, and that this Happiness consists in *being Like God*, from hence it will follow, that as the First Sin must have arisen from some Mistake, so that mistake must have been in something, that they were made to think, would *make them Like God*.

AND since we have before shewn, that this Likeness to God, which our First Parents must have made the End of all their Operations, must consist in acting according to Right Reason, which we call Holiness, and that so long as they continued to act according to Right Reason, they would not only be Happy, but Immortally so; From hence it will follow, that as our First Parents had no Inclination in their Will, nor any bias in their Appetites to act contrary to Reason, and therefore could be in no hazard on that Side, of falling into Sin, and by that means of falling from that Happy state they were made in; So they had nothing to take care of, but that their Reason should be always Right, that is, that they should always make a Right Judgment of things, so as truly to discern and distinguish between Good, and Evil, and never to mistake the one for the other: And if they could be but sure of such a knowledge of Good, and Evil, they could not fail, both of Happiness, and Immortality, and in this respect of being perfectly *Like God*.

AND if this was the Case, as it demonstratively was, then, as the only thing our First Parents could desire, in order to Immortal Happiness, was to be sure of such a Knowledge of Good, and Evil; so this seems in Reason to be the only thing they were capable of being tempted in, and therefore the hopes of this Knowledge, of Good and Evil, seems to be the only thing possible for them to be drawn into Sin by.

AND if to all this we add, what we have likewise before prov'd, that in a State of Purity, whatever was done, was done out of a Principle of duty to God, we may from hence farther conclude, that as the First Sin of our First Parents was owing to some mistake, and that mistake in something, they thought would contribute to their Happiness in making them like God, in giving them a Knowledge of Good and Evil, so it must have been done out of a false Imagination, that it was what they must do, out of Duty to God.

THUS far we stand upon certain ground from the natures, and reasons of things.

BUT yet how evident soever this appears to be, since we have already shewn, that the First Sin must have been committed against some former Revelation, it is hard to conceive, in our First Parents Circumstances, how it could be possible for them to think, that any thing could contribute to their Happiness, which they knew to be contrary to a reveal'd Command; or how they could think it their Duty to do, what they knew by Revelation they must not do; unless they had some notion of a second Revelation, commanding them to act contrary to a former, as necessary to their Happiness so to do.

FOR to do any thing out of duty to God, supposes in the very notion of it, that it is the Will of God, that it shall be done; and by consequence to act against a known Revelation out of duty, must suppose some further Revelation declaring that action to be the Will of God.

AND therefore, if our First Parents sinn'd against a known Revelation, out of a mistaken notion of duty, it will follow,

THAT that mistake must have arisen from some false imagination of a second Revelation to take off the obligation of the former, injoining them to do that as necessary to their Happiness, which by the former they were commanded not to do:

BUT yet how certain soever this seems to be, it is hard to conceive, how it could be, that is, how they could be drawn into such a false imagination:

AND therefore, since this is a matter of Fact, and by consequence is best understood by History, whatever History we have of this event, which agrees with these Reasonings, and yet accounts for these difficulties, we must not only conclude that History to be Credible, but we must esteem it so much the more Credible, by how much these difficulties are, by Reason, the more unaccountable.

Now such a History we have in this Book of *Moses*, which gives us an account of this very case, which no other History, that we know of, pretends to do, and 'tis so exactly agreeable to what we have already demonstrated, that I question not but you are before-hand with me in the application. Burnett.

IN this History we are no sooner inform'd of the Creation of Mankind, the whole of which was then, only one Man and Woman, who are said to have been placed in a Garden, where they had Objects suitable to every Appetite; but we are told of a Revelation God made to them concerning their Food: In which as he gives them a Commission to eat of all the fruits of the Garden, excepting one, so he forbids them that One, under the Penalty of Death, as being, in its own nature, dangerous to be eaten.

'TIS worthy our notice, as I have before observ'd, that this History begins here, because I have already shewn that there was a necessity in the nature of things of such a Revelation as this, in our First Parents Circumstances, that they might be informed concerning their Food, if there was any thing, which it was not safe for them to eat.

AND 'tis a particular mark of the Credibility of this History, that here was such a Provision made in this case. Now,

AGAINST this Revelation they are represented to have sinned, by being drawn into a mistake by the false Insinuations of a Serpent.

WHAT this Serpent was, is not here told: It is probable this Expression was well understood in those days, when *Moses* wrote whilst the Tradition was fresh, and of late date, and he needed only to hint at what every body knew. But however that be, we are thus far certain, that by the Serpent could not barely be meant the animal so called, because several things are evidently spoken of it, as are not compatible to the nature of that creature, and can only belong to a Rational Agent.

AND since this History tells us, there was no other Rational creature of the Human kind, but one Man, and Woman; and therefore none of that species could be intended by it, we may thence infer, that there must have been some other order of Rational Creatures, which this Historian must have aim'd at, and therefore by the Serpent he must have meant some wicked Spirit, who, either appear'd under the disguise of a Serpent, or else actuated the real body of that creature, or else is represented by this expression, as a Figurative and Symbolical Character.

AND accordingly we are told in other places of Scripture, with which antient Tradition agrees, that this Serpent was That Evil Spirit, whom we commonly call the Devil, who is represented there, as the common Enemy of Mankind.

AND here it is to be observed, that this Evil Spirit, according to Tradition, was originally created an Angel of Light in a State of Happiness in those Mansions of Glory, where God is said, in a more peculiar and extraordinary manner, to display His Majestick Presence: But how great soever his Happiness was, he is nevertheless said to have fallen into Rebellion against God, and thereupon to have been cast with those wicked companions, which he had drawn into Confederacy with Himself, into some lower Regions of Dishonour and Unhappiness.

WHEN this Rebellion began, and when this punishment was executed, whether before, or after our First Parents fall, we are not told: We have reasons to incline us to imagine, that his attempt upon our First Parents, was his first transgression.

BUT if others think it more probable, that his first transgression was before, and that he had before been banish'd from the presence of God, 'twill not then be unnatural to conceive, that the motive which might induce him to destroy mankind, might be his Envy of their Happiness, whilst himself was doom'd to misery: And perhaps too, being desirous to revenge himself, if by any means he could, on God, he might endeavour to defeat the Intention of God, in the Creation of Mankind for a Happy and Immortal Life, by drawing them into Sin, and Misery, and Death; Flattering Himself, 'tis likely, that if he succeeded in it, he should not only ruin Mankind, but, as it were, out-wit, and over-reach

Burnett. over-reach his Creator too, by obliging Him to destroy His own Workmanship, and in them, the whole Species of Mankind at once.

THIS is the Temper of that Evil Spirit, according as he is represented in other parts of Scripture: And this, I say, may reasonably be supposed to have been the Motive that induced him to this Wicked Enterprize; for the compassing of which, he is here said to have come as a Serpent: Which if it must be literally understood of a real Serpent, 'tis hard for us, at this distance, to account for the reasons, that could move Him to make choice of that, before any other Form.

BUT if what the world had generally believed, be true, which the Christian Religion confirms, *viz.* That there is a Higher Order of Good Beings, which we call Angels, and if it be probable, that these Angels might converse with our First Parents in their State of Purity in that Refulgent Form, they are in other parts of Scripture said to have; it is not unlikely, but this Serpent might have been, as several learned men have thought, one of that Bright Fiery Kind, called Seraphs, and it might have been chosen, as having some resemblance, it may be, to those Angelick Appearances, our First Parents had been us'd to.

BUT be this as it will, Whatever the Expression means, whether that he came in the real Body, or only under the disguise of a Serpent, or whether it is intended only as a figurative character of subtilty; in any sense it represents to us a design form'd by this Evil Spirit to deceive: And with this view, he is said to have address'd himself to the Woman, endeavouring to persuade her, contrary to the express Revelation of God, that there was no danger in eating the forbidden fruit.

AND, for a reason, He tells her, it could not be, because *The Lord knew, that in the Day they should eat thereof, their Eyes should be opened, and they should be as Gods, knowing Good and Evil.*

BY which was meant, no doubt, as I have explained before, that, as they wanted nothing to make them sure of everlasting Happiness, but always certainly to discern between Good and Evil, so that was what this Fruit would give them: So that if they did but eat of it, they should not fail of such a clear apprehension of things, as that they should never be mistaken, and by consequence could then want nothing to make them Like God, and free them from all hazard of Death or Misery.

THIS was evidently the nature and design of the Argument, and as this was the very Motive I have already hinted at, so it was the only one, as I have shewn before, that they were capable of being tempted by.

AND as he urges this motive to them, on the consideration of the Lord's Knowing it to be true, so he came, no doubt, under a specious pretence of being sent from God, to inform them of it, and to take off the former Inhibition, that they might not be any longer deprived of that which he said, *the Lord knew* would be so available to their Happiness.

FOR though here is nothing in this History of any such pretence as this, yet here is nothing said to the contrary, and as we are therefore left to our own conjecture, what we think most reasonable in the case; so we may very well conclude in favour of that, which we have already prov'd certain from the nature of things.

BUT beside considering our First Parents Circumstances; *Ye shall not die*, was such an evident Contradiction to the Positive Revelation of God, that unless it had been ushered in by some previous pretence or other, to gain him Credit and Admission, one cannot in reason imagine, our First Parents should be capable of so much as lending an Ear to so palpable a Falshood.

BUT much less still can we imagine, that the bare assertion of the Serpent should be of so much Authority with them, as to persuade them to act contrary to the known Command of God, unless he came with a pretence of Authority from God:

FOR as they were perfectly Holy, and had all their Powers and Faculties in subjection to Reason, and therefore could not incline to do any thing, but as their Reason was satisfied, 'twas fit to be done; so neither, by consequence, could they incline to eat any thing, 'till their Reason should be satisfied, 'twas fit to be

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eaten : And since they had the Command of God, not to eat of the Fruit under *Burnett*, the Penalty of Death ; as there could be no sufficient Reason against this Command, to satisfy them that they might eat, or that they should not die, but the same Authority that gave the Command ; So we must conclude, That as our First Parents sinn'd against that Command, by the Instigation of the Serpent, he must have persuaded them with this pretence, That He came by the Authority of God, and as a Messenger from Him, and they must have complied in obedience to it.

AND tho', 'tis true, the History does not directly say this, but only takes notice of some such of the more material Circumstances, as were necessary for the knowledge of the general matter of Fact ; Yet 'tis worth our Observation, that in the very Entrance upon the Story, it is implied, by the abruptness of the words in the first verse of the third Chapter, that there had been some precedent parly between the Serpent and the Woman :

THE words in the original run thus [not as we translate them ; *Yea, hath God said?*] But *Yea, Because, Hath God said? Ye shall not eat of every Tree of the Garden:*

WHICH is as much, as if he had said, *Yea*, for this cause, viz. because *God hath said, ye shall not eat of every Tree of the Garden.*

NOW these words are evidently spoken, as an Answer to something that had been said before, which occasioned the Woman to ask a Reason for what he had pretended to her, as if she had inquir'd, whether the thing was really as he pretended, and what was the reason of it :

TO which He answers, *Yea*, that it was so, and that this was the reason of it, because God had not given them liberty to eat of every Tree of the Garden.

NOW what can we imagine more natural in this Case, and more suitable to this very Expression, than that he had pretended, he was sent from God ; The reason of which, when she inquires after, he tells her, it was about the forbidden Fruit : For, says he, *Hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every Tree of the Garden?*

TO which the Woman replied, as if she had interrupted Him, *Of the Fruit of the Trees of the Garden we may eat, but of the Fruit of the Tree in the midst of the Garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.*

BY which words she seems to have thought, that they must not only not Eat, but not Touch the Fruit.

TO this the Serpent answered, *Ye shall not surely die, For the Lord knows, that in the day that ye eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as Gods, knowing Good and Evil.*

SO that upon the whole, the reasoning is thus, as if he should have said, " You ask me the Reasons of my being sent from God, and I tell you, it is with relation to the Forbidden Fruit ; And whereas Death is threaten'd to the eating of it, and you seem by this Expression [*lest ye die*] to intimate, as tho' you apprehend it forbidden, as being of a destructive nature in itself, as well as that it would expose you to the Wrath of God ; I am come to tell you, ye shall not die, and that you are no longer forbid to eat of it.

" FOR the Lord knows, that it is so far from being of a destructive nature, that it is the very contrary, and instead of destroying you, will exalt you, and make you like Himself, by giving you a Right Knowledge of Good and Evil.

" AND as you are sensible, he made you to be Happy in a Likeness to Himself, and knows there is nothing wanting in your Circumstances to assure you of being immortally so, but to be assur'd of a Right Knowledge of Good and Evil, so as never to be mistaken in your Choice, you cannot imagine that he will continue to deny you this Fruit, which will in its nature give you this Knowledge ; Or that he who desires you should be Immortal, will put you to death, for doing that, which will naturally make you Immortal.

" NOW, such is the nature of this Fruit ; and as the Lord knows it to be so, so he has sent me to inform you of it, and though before, He thought fit to forbid the eating it, under the Penalty of Death, you are now commanded

Burnett. "to eat of it, as a necessary means, in the nature of things, to a Happy and Immortal Life."

THIS is the substance of the Argument, and this, I think, is abundantly clear, from what has been already proved.

IF there should be any prejudice still remaining against this notion of the Serpent's tempting our First Parents to sin, under the pretence of his being a Messenger from God, as being so altogether different from the commonly received opinion; if it displease any one who already believes the New Testament, he will see it there fully confirmed by St. Paul.

FOR in the 2d Ep. Cor. xi. 3, where he cautions the *Corinthians* against a False Teacher, that came to them, as an Inspir'd person, and as a True Apostle sent by God, when he was really a Minister of *Satan*, he makes a comparison between *Eve* and those people, and represents them in the same Condition she was in, when she was beguiled by the Serpent.

AND again, on the other hand, he afterwards makes a like comparison between *Satan*, and his Ministers, and represents these, as acting the same part with the *Corinthians*, as *Satan* had done with *Eve*.

AND as he expresses his fear lest the *Corinthians* should be beguiled by the Ministers of *Satan*, as *Eve* was by the Serpent, so he afterwards tells us how that was: For, says he, as *Satan transforms himself into an Angel of Light*, so his Ministers are transformed into Ministers of Righteousness: And by this it is implied, that if the people should be beguiled by such ministers, under such a false appearance of Ministers of Righteousness, they would then be beguiled, as *Eve* was by *Satan*, under the false appearance of a Messenger from God.

AND as 'tis plain, that it is in reference to this very case of *Eve*, that *Satan* is said to have transformed himself into an Angel of Light; so we have no hint in Scripture, that he did so any where else; and 'tis very probable, that in the Apostles time, there was some general tradition of this Event to which these words refer, and upon which this Argument is built.

THUS you see what Authority I have for this Opinion, that as our First Parents were seduced by an Evil Spirit, so he did it under the appearance of an Angel of Light, and as a Messenger sent from God: And as he thus applied himself to the Woman, and by these arts of delusion had prevailed upon her Judgment, it is said, that when she saw, that is, was convinced, contrary to what she thought before, that the Tree was good for Food, and since it was desirable to look unto, and a Tree to be desired to make one Wise, and by consequence everlastingly Happy, She ate.

THIS was the consideration that wrought upon her; and she, alas! eager and impatient for the security of this Great End, and not yet acquainted with imposture and delusion, inconsiderably swallows the Bait: And as the Fruit was agreeable to the eye, so finding it, it may be, pleasant to the taste, and herself not only Alive, but perhaps her Spirits exalted and enliven'd by it; away she goes, with the same arguments, 'tis probable, to her husband, which being strengthened by Her experience, prevailed on Him to eat, as she had done, and so they Both fell into the Fatal Evil.

THESE things being thus, you may here see what a wonderful agreement there is between this History, and our foregoing Reasonings in every the minutest Circumstance.

YOU see here how Sin came into the world; That the First Transgression was committed (as our Reason had demonstrated it must be) by the First Parents of mankind, and that too against a known express Revelation, and that too thro' a mistake, they were drawn into, by the false insinuation of an Evil Spirit, persuading them to it, as necessary to their Happiness, as it would make them like Gods, knowing Good and Evil, and therefore incapable of Sin, and pretending to be sent as a Messenger from God, to acquaint them of a New Revelation to command it.

ALL this we had before discovered from the natures and reasons of things, and as this History receives a great degree of Credibility from its punctual agree-

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ment in all these Circumstances, so it has likewise no inconsiderable addition, as I have observed before, not only from the nature of the Revelation made to our First Parents, against which they offended, as being such, as was absolutely necessary, and such as their Condition indispensibly required, but also from the nature of that particular Temptation that is here said to be offered to them, as being such, as I have likewise observed, as was so exactly suitable to their Circumstances, that they do not seem to have been capable of being drawn into Sin in any other manner, or by any other Temptation, than this.

C H A P. II.

The Effects and Consequences of the First Sin, and the Methods of Providence necessary in the Case.

I COME now, in the next place, to inquire, what the Effects and Consequences of the First Sin were, that by knowing the Circumstances mankind were brought into by it, we may find out the necessary methods of Providence, that their Happiness might require, considering those Circumstances, and whether this History agrees accordingly.

The Origin of the Depravation of Human Nature.

As to this, we have already shewn, that Mortality, and the Depravation of Human Nature must have been the Effect of some Sin of our First Parents, which must have been committed before they had Children; but whether it was the Effect of one, or more transgressions, and when those transgressions were committed, and whether this was inflicted as a punishment, or produced by the natural Causality of Sin, is proper matter of inquiry in this place; and as the right settling the point will be of great importance to the forming right notions of Religion, so it will be very well accounted for by this History of *Moses*.

'Tis evident, this History agrees with Reason, in ascribing the Certainty of Death to Sin: And as this is here represented as the First Effect of it, so is it said to be the Effect of the First Sin, and that of our First Parents; It having been threatned, that, upon their eating the forbidden Fruit, *dying they should die*, by which, according to the *Hebrew* Phraseology, is meant, that they should be sure to die.

BUT though this gives us an account how our First Parents came to die, yet it does not inform us, how their Posterity became Mortal, much less how their Nature came to be depraved, unless it were the natural Effect of the Fruit forbidden, which being of a noxious Quality, might work this Effect in a natural way, and was therefore, as we have already shewn, forbidden to be eaten, as being in its own nature dangerous and destructive.

The Depravation of Human Nature, not included in the bare denunciation of Death.

FOR if this Death threaten'd to our First Parents, was only an Arbitrary punishment, which depended only on the Will of God, and not upon the nature of the Fruit itself, the eating of it could do nothing more than make them liable to the Execution of the Sentence.

AND as the Sentence was Death, and the reason of it was the punishment of Sin, it could in reason reach no farther than the Sinner; And as the sin to which this punishment was annex'd, was committed by our First Parents, it could in reason be only executed on them.

AND therefore, though it gives us a plain and natural account, how they became liable to Death, yet it leaves us in the dark, as to the depravation of Human nature, and does by no means inform us, How they, and their Posterity came by those *Lustings of the Flesh against the Spirit*, and that natural tendency

Burnett. to decay and dissolution, which we visibly see is inherent in, and propagated with our very natures.

THIS Corruption of Nature, as I have shewn, we derive from our First Parents, and I have likewise shewn, it was the Effect of Sin:

BUT if the Death here threaten'd to the eating of the forbidden Fruit, was a bare Arbitrary Punishment, it is hard to conceive, how this Corruption of nature could be the Effect of this Sin:

FOR the punishment here threaten'd is Death, and 'tis self-evident, that a mere outward Sentence of Condemnation to Death, does by no means imply any inward alteration of the nature of the person condemn'd, that the very texture of his bodily constitution shall be changed, and that his Body shall have an inward tendency to that Death he is outwardly condemn'd to:

MUCH less can it imply, that the *Flesh shall lust against the Spirit, and the Members wage war against the Mind*; And yet this is what we derive from our First Parents, as I have said, and what they contracted by Sin; And as this could not be included in the denunciation of Death, so neither,

The Depravation of Human Nature not from Sin, barely considered as Sin.

2dly, COULD it arise from their Sin of eating the forbidden fruit, merely consider'd, as Sin.

FOR if their Sin was, as we have shewn, only owing on their part to a mistake of their Understanding, to which their Inferior Powers, and Faculties were obedient, here was nothing in the Nature of Man, or his operations, amiss, thus far.

AS the ruling principle of the Rational Nature approv'd and directed, so the Will inclin'd to chuse and act. And this was as it should be: This is the order of Nature, and so long as this order is pursued, it can never produce any breach in the Human Constitution, or any disorder or confusion in its Faculties:

FROM acting according to Nature can never arise any unnatural tendency to dissolution, and when the Body is govern'd by the Understanding, this can never beget a *Lusting of the Flesh against the Spirit*, tho' it should happen to be ever so much mistaken in its Judgment.

AND therefore this Corruption, or Depravation of Human nature, which we derive from our first Parents, could not proceed from this Sin of theirs, consider'd merely, as Sin, that is, as an act contrary to the Command, and Will of God.

AND for the same reason it will follow,

The Depravation of Human nature not from a frequency of Sin.

3dly, THAT it could not arise from a frequency of Sin.

FOR if our First Parents were, as we have shewn, capable of sinning only thro' mistake; and if the obedience of the inferior Faculties to a mistaken judgment cannot naturally change the Human constitution, and invert the order of their Faculties, we cannot conceive, that any such change, and disorder could arise from any such mistake, tho' ever so frequent.

BUT if it might, yet we have no reason to suppose any such frequent mistakes in our First Parents case:

FOR all that they could be mistaken in, was, either such things, as their own Reason was not able to find out, or such as Revelation was to inform them of.

BUT as for those things, that lay without, or beyond the reach of Reason, so far as they were necessary to be known, so far they were necessary to be made known by Revelation, and how they could be capable of mistake, in things that they knew, in that they are suppos'd to be made known to them, is not easy to apprehend: And 'tis what we should never have understood, had not this History resolv'd the difficulty.

AND tho' we see by this History, how they were drawn into mistake once, yet we cannot but think, that they would be much more cautious for the time to come, and that it would be much harder for them to be drawn into a Second Error after the fatal misfortune of the First.

BEFORE the First sin they knew not what temptation was, nor could have *Burnett.* any apprehension of it, or that there was any deluding Spirit, who could have any design against them: But now they were acquainted with Both, and therefore, as they now knew their danger, and therefore could better provide for their future Safety, so we can have no reason to doubt, but they did so.

AND therefore since that depravation of their nature, which they derived to their Children, was the Effect of sin, and that too, some sin they committed before they had Children:

AND since they were not capable of sinning, but by mistake, and not easily capable, one would think, of mistaking at all, much less of mistaking, and by consequence of sinning, often; we may thence reasonably conclude, That as this depravation of Human nature was the Effect of Sin, so it was by consequence the First Sin:

AND if so, it will follow,

First, THAT it was either inflicted on our First Parents, as a Punishment of that Sin by God; or else,

Secondly, THAT it was the natural effect of Something in the matter of that Sin, and by consequence was produced by the Fruit itself, the eating of which, according to this History, was the First sin.

WHICH of these is the most reasonable, is now the Question.

The Depravation of Human nature not inflicted as a Punishment.

IF we take the former, and suppose it a Punishment, considering, that a first Fault, especially if owing to Weakness, and Mistake, is usually look'd on as matter of Mercy and Compassion:

AND considering how patient and long-suffering God appears to be, under the daring and Multiplied Provocations of Mankind, one should be apt to think, that he would hardly inflict a severer Punishment, than he had threatned for a single Fact of this nature.

FOR all that was threatned, was Death, but if the Moral Depravation of their nature was inflicted too; that is, if he himself raised up the Inferior Faculties against Reason, and made the *Flesh to lust against the Spirit*, this was more (and a much more severe Punishment) than Death.

TO punish sin of any kind with Death alone, we have shewn to be consistent with the Original Reason of * things, and it might be proper for the support of God's Authority, and therefore it might, even by our Reason, be thought convenient, as a Warning to the succeeding World.

BUT to suppose, that a Holy, and a Good God, who, as we have shewn, does no otherwise incline to preserve sinners, but as he desires their Happiness, and as a means of that, their Repentance and Reformation; and who will not do this, without some means to discourage the Innocent from imitating the † Sinner:

I SAY, to suppose that such a Being would punish such a sin as this was, with such a Corruption of Nature as was in itself an Unholy state, and by consequence the Infliction of it would seem to be an Unholy Act:

TO suppose that he, who desires the Reformation of sinners, and the prevention of sin in those, who are yet Innocent, should, by his own Act, condemn them to such a state, as would naturally, and almost necessarily draw them into more, and more heinous sins:

NAY, such a state as must be unavoidably convey'd to their whole Innocent Posterity, and involve the whole Mass in Guilt and Misery, is not so soft a Resolution of the point, as Reason alone would incline to:

AND tho' it is not for Man to set bounds to God, and to determine what is fit for him to do, yet where we have no better Authority, than Reason, 'tis natural to lean to those accounts of things, which are most agreeable to Reason:

AND therefore one would rather chuse to account for this Corruption,

* Pag. 436, 437. of the former Treatise.

† Ibid. p. 437.

Burnett.

The Depravation or Corruption of Human Nature the Effect of a Natural Cause.

Secondly, B Y supposing it to have arisen from a Natural Cause.

F O R it is not hard to conceive, how a Natural Cause might excite irregular Appetites in the Body, nor how it might beget Diseases and Death, nor how such a Constitution may be convey'd thro' a long succession of many Generations.

T H E S E are things that fall under every day's Observation.

A N D therefore one would be very apt to believe, that since this depravation of Human Nature did arise, as we have shewn, from the First sin of our First Parents, there might have been something in the matter of the sin, that is, in the Fruit itself, which might have been the cause of it in a Natural way.

N O W that it was so, as we have very good Reason to believe, from what we have already observed, viz. That the Fruit had been forbidden, as *dangerous* to be eaten; so if it does also further appear from those Effects, which were produced by the eating of it in the Bodies of our First Parents, even according to this History itself, it will be a further addition to its Credibility,

N O W the first Effect that we are here informed of, is, That upon the Eating of the Fruit, *their Eyes were opened, and they knew that they were naked, and sewed Fig-leaves together to make themselves Aprons, or Coverings.*

N O W, by *their Eyes being opened, and their knowing that they were naked*, cannot be understood, that these two persons, who, as we have shewn, were made Perfect in their kind, could be in a state of Blindness, 'till this time, or that they were Ignorant of their being without Cloaths, 'till then:

T H I S would be too absurd an Interpretation;

B U T, by *their Eyes being opened*, must be understood, as that Expression is commonly used amongst ourselves, the discovering something, which they had never seen, or known before:

A N D by their *knowing they were Naked*, must be meant, that they found themselves under a Necessity of being Cloathed, which they did not discover 'till now.

B E F O R E they had eaten of this Fruit, we are told, that both *the Man and the Woman were Naked, and were not ashamed.*

B U T now, after the Transgression, *they were Naked and ashamed*; that is, they were ashamed at their Nakedness; They saw such uncomely Motions, and Disorders in their Bodies, as they had never seen before, and were ashamed at; and therefore thought it necessary to hide, by making themselves Coverings to conceal them with.

T H I S is what may be meant by their Nakedness, and this was purely the Effect of this forbidden Fruit, as we are given to understand in the 11th verse of this Chapter.

T H E R E Adam is represented, as making this Excuse for Hiding himself from God, *That he was afraid, because he was Naked.*

U P O N which God puts this Question to him, *Who told thee that thou wast Naked? Hast thou eaten of the Fruit whereof I told thee, thou shouldst not eat?*

I N which Words it is sufficiently intimated, That the eating of this Fruit would discover this to Him, as it did, by producing those Indecencies in his Body, which he now saw with shame, and endeavoured to Hide from his own sight, as well as he did himself from God's.

T H I S, I think, is plain beyond any Reasonable exception: And if so, we can be no longer at a loss for the Cause of that mighty Change, that has been wrought upon our Nature.

How the Depravation of Human Nature might be produced by a Natural Cause.

F O R these Effects, which this Fruit produced in the Bodies of our First Parents, and which they were so ashamed at, do shew a manifest depravation of the Human Nature, both as to that Moral and Natural Perfection, which they were created in.

As to the Moral Perfection of Human Nature; This we have shewn consist- *Burnett.*
ed in the subjection of the Inferior Faculties to Reason; And 'till the eating of
this Fruit, all the Appetites and Operations of the Body, were under the Ab-
solute Command of the Mind.

BUT as soon as they had eaten, 'tis plain the Body became immediately ungo-
vernable, its Appetites inordinate, and its Motions unruly, because we see they
were such as their Reason condemned, and were ashamed at, but yet such as they
could not subdue, and therefore were forced to hide.

AND then as to the Natural Perfection of the Body; this consisted, as we have
likewise shewn, in a great measure, in the Frame and Composure of it, which,
in its Primitive Constitution was made in an Even and Regular Temper, having
all its parts in a due Proportion, its Blood and Humours in a proper Motion, its
Animal Spirits in an Equal Distribution, according to their respective Ends
and Uses.

BUT by those Effects this Fruit produced in the Body, 'tis evident, this Equa-
bility of Temper was broken; and new, and those disorderly, Motions were ex-
cited; the Blood was visibly Inflam'd, and the Animal spirits, not only Disturb'd,
but, 'tis probable, Augmented too, by the new Juices of this Fruit; which be-
ing Incorporated with the Blood and Humours, may easily be conceived to Cre-
ate, not only an Irregular and Unnatural, but also a Corruptive Fermentation in
the Whole.

FOR the Health, the Vigour, and Stability of the Body consists in a due
Combination of its parts.

AND therefore it being composed of several Parts, in various Motions, of di-
verse Natures, and discordant Qualities, whilst these continue in a due Mixture,
a just Proportion, an equal Temperature, and regular Operation, and there is a
Natural Harmony, so there is a perfect Health and Vigour maintain'd.

BUT when this Natural Harmony is broke, and there comes to be a Civil
war in the Members, when this equal Mixture and Proportion is destroy'd, and
one quality makes head against another, these intestine Commotions must una-
voidably corrupt and waste its Constitution.

FOR every the least disorder of this kind, is what we call a Disease, and by
consequence a Degree of Death; and the Body is necessarily impair'd by it in its
Activity, Strength, Life, Vigour or Operation; and though it may bring Death
upon the Body, by gentle and slow decays; yet we may Reasonably conceive
that one time or other it will certainly do it, and that sooner or later, according
to the Nature and Degree of the Disorder.

FOR the longer the Disorder lasts, the greater it will naturally grow, and as
every the least degree of it, is a weakning to the Body, and a tendency to Corrup-
tion, as it is an alteration of its Natural Texture and Proportion, in which all
Corruption of Bodies consists; so by consequence, according to the measure of
its continuance, such must the decays of Nature be, 'till they terminate in a Fi-
nal Dissolution.

NOW that this was the Nature of this Forbidden Fruit, that, as it had excited
such strange Disorders in the Body, so it would likewise beget Corruption and
Death, is further probable from this very History.

FOR we are herein told, not only of this Tree of Knowledge, which our First
Parents were forbidden to eat of; but likewise of a Tree of Life, which, after
they had transgressed, they were excluded from.

AND as they were not allowed to eat of the other, lest they should Die; so on
the contrary, they are deprived of this, lest they should eat of it and Live, *ver. 22.*

NOW from hence, as we may argue on the one hand, That this Tree of Life
was of a Sanative, and Balsamick Virtue, which would naturally preserve Life:

So, on the other Hand, we may as reasonably conclude, That this other Tree
of Knowledge was of a Noxious Quality, which would naturally bring Corrup-
tion and Death.

FOR since they were deny'd the Use of this Tree of Life, lest they should eat
of it, and Live;

As

Burnett. As it is thence evident, that the eating of that Tree would have prevented their Dying;

So it is equally evident, that this Death was purely a Natural Effect, in that it might be cured by a Natural Cause; And we may as well suppose it might be occasioned by the Physical Operation of the Tree of Knowledge, as that it might have been thus cured by the Tree of Life.

Now from all this put together, it does sufficiently appear, how the Human Nature came to be depraved, according to this History of *Moses*, wherein it is set forth as the Natural Effect of sin, and that too the First sin of our First Parents, and that sin committed upon Mistake, and that too in a Matter of Revelation, and that too in respect of something, which they thought their Duty to do, as necessary to their Happiness in making them Like God. In all which we see a wonderful Credibility, as there is an evident and exact agreement between this History, and our foregoing Reasonings:

Why God did not prevent the Depravation of Human Nature, answered.

AND though it may seem strange to us, who know not the things of God, nor can dive into the secret Reasons of his Operations, that he should permit such a Fatal Event, as this, to come to pass;

YET if we remember what has been before proved, that God Governs all things according to their Natures, Rational things in a Rational way, and Natural things in a Natural way, there is nothing in this Event, but what may be very fairly accounted for.

FOR as Mankind are Rational Creatures, indued with the Faculties of Understanding, and Will, if they be governed according to their Natures, it must be in such a way as is suitable to these Faculties.

AND by consequence, they must not only be provided with all the necessary means of knowledge of every thing necessary to be known, and with sufficient Motives to chuse, and do whatever is necessary to be chosen and done, but they must also be left to their own Freedom.

AND therefore, in this Case of the Forbidden Fruit, when God had forbidden the eating of it, as being in its own nature dangerous to be eaten, and had timely forewarned them of that danger;

AND to oblige them the more effectually to avoid it, considering that he forbade it in the way of a Command, and forewarned them of the Danger under the notion of a Penalty, and that too expressed in such a manner, as though he had engaged his own Veracity to see the Execution of it;

AFTER they had been thus informed what was necessary for them to do, and had such a Powerful Motive to observe it, what could there be wanting in their Case to a Rational Nature, but to leave them to chuse according to their Reason?

AND if after this they do eat of this Fruit, what can Reason expect, but that as God likewise governs Natural things in a Natural way, the Fruit should be left as a Natural Cause to produce such an Effect as was suitable to its Nature, as this History tells us that it did? And therefore, what can we desire more consistent with the Natures and Reasons of things, and by Consequence more worthy to be received by Reasonable Men, than this Account of *Moses's* concerning this Event, so far as we have here considered and examined it?

THUS we have a View of the Effects of the First Sin, and of the Origin of the Depravation of Human Nature, and how Mankind fell from that Purity and Perfection, they were originally Created in.

AND from hence, as I have shewn, we may be able to form a right Notion of that Providence, or Government, which is necessary to the Happiness of the World, so far as relates to Mankind.

FOR since the Human Nature was created in a Perfect State, as being necessary to a Perfect Happiness, it will follow,

THAT so far as we are wanting of that Original Perfection, so far we are wanting of the means that are necessary to our Happiness, as has been shewn.

AND as Government is nothing else, but the ordering of things to their Ends, *Burnett:* which is their Happiness, according to their natures, and capacities, if we can discover from these Effects of the First transgression, and the Circumstances our First Parents brought themselves into by it, what methods of Providence were, in the nature of things, necessary to theirs and their Posterities Happiness, considering those Circumstances; as we shall have so far a rational notion of the Divine Providence, or Government, so if this History of *Moses* agrees accordingly, and gives us such an account of such methods taken, as our Reason sees necessary in the nature of things, it is so far to be esteem'd a Consistent, and Credible History.

C H A P. III.

The necessary Methods of Providence upon the First Sin consider'd.

THAT therefore which we are next to inquire into, is, What methods of Providence the natures of things direct us to, as necessary to the Happiness of our First Parents, and their Posterity, considering the sad Effects of the First transgression, and the condition they were brought into by it. And for this purpose it will be necessary to look back, and consider more particularly their case. And

THE first thing we may observe in it, is, that, whereas, before their transgression, they were in a State of Perfection, and Immortality, as has been shewn, they were now sure to Dye:

AND as Death was contrary to their Nature, and that Happiness, they were made for, so if we conceive the Goodness of God dispos'd to consult their Happiness in this case, we must suppose some method would be provided for their Preservation, so far as they were capable of it.

NOW we have already shewn *, that a Sinner in this case might be capable of Preservation, so far as any Suitable means could be found for the prevention of a future Disobedience, and the maintenance of the Honour, and Authority of God, lest He should be thought regardless of His Laws.

WHAT methods are most proper for this end, God alone is Judge: But it seems not unsuitable to Reason, *First*, That God should let the Sinner feel some ill effects of Sin; and *2dly*, That He should shew some token of his Displeasure at it, by inflicting some suitable punishment for it, to affright the offender from a further disobedience, and discourage others from following his example.

AND therefore, since our First Parents were sure to Dye, on the day that they ate of the forbidden fruit, that is, they were subject to certain Death from that day, and might have been put to Death immediately; we have reason to think, if they were not put to Death, that there was some provision or other of this kind made.

AND as this is a matter of Fact, and can be known only by History, if this History of *Moses* gives us any suitable account of this, so far 'tis a credible History. But,

2dly, THO' our First Parents might be Preserved from Death by the Goodness of God in this manner, yet here another question will arise, How long that Preservation might be supposed to last? For that it could not be a Total Preservation from Death, we have very good grounds to think, and that too, as I shall shew, from the nature of things.

FOR, tho' they were made of such a natural firmness of Constitution, that, they were, whilst they continued in that Perfect State, which they were created in, capable of living for ever, as I have formerly † shewn, yet if upon eating the forbidden fruit, their nature was chang'd; If the fruit, being of a noxious, and destructive quality, had broke in upon their Natural Constitution, and had produced such a Corruptive Fermentation in their Bodies, as would bring them to

P. 436, &c. of the former Treatise.
VOL. III.

† P. 495. of the former Treatise.
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dissolution

Burnett. dissolution by a natural Causality, as has likewise been shewn, Then, since God governs all things according to their Natures, Natural things in a Natural way, by leaving Natural Causes to produce their Natural Effects, we may hence conclude, that God would not so far preserve our First Parents from Death, as to exempt them from this natural necessity of Dying.

BESIDES, according to this account of *Moses*, God seems to have put them under a moral necessity of it. For by telling them positively, that *Dying, they should Dye*, He had in a manner given His word, it should be so.

AND tho' it may be disputed in such cases, whether Lawgivers are oblig'd by such expressions to a literal Execution of such Penalties, yet, considering, that the total Exemption from this penalty might incline our First Parents, or their Posterity, to think God regardless of His Word, and considering what ill consequences might ensue from thence, there seems to be a necessity it should be executed.

BUT then, as they could never be sure, they should be put to Death, and by consequence could never be sure, God would perform His word, so long as they should find themselves preserv'd, unless they had some further Revelation concerning it; From hence we may infer, in case they were preserv'd, the necessity of a Revelation concerning their Death, that, tho' they were Preserv'd, they should be sure to Dye.

BUT then, As the Reason of their being Preserved at all, is, their Happiness, and as it is abundantly evident that no man can be Happy under the Expectation of Certain Death, without some Assurance of a deliverance from it; so from hence it will follow, that as there was a necessity in our First Parents case, of some Revelation to assure them of a Certainty of Death, so there was a like necessity of another Revelation to assure them of a deliverance from it, and of their being restored to Life again.

AND thus we have a view of several Revelations, that seem to have been necessary in the nature of things, upon the first act of Sin, considering this first Effect of it, The Certainty of Death.

AND if to this we add, and consider further, how this sin of our First Parents, that occasioned all this, came about, viz. by the instigation, and subtlety of the Devil; If it was, as 'tis probable it might be, attempted by him out of Envy at the Happiness of Man, and in opposition to the Wisdom and Power of God, here is a great deal more required in this case: Here is not only the Honour of God, in respect of Man, to be provided for, lest He should think God regardless of His Laws and His Word; But here is also something to be done, in relation to the Devil, lest He should seem to be too hard for the Wisdom of God, as if He had baffled and defeated His design.

AND as from hence we may rationally conclude, that if we have any true History of Providence in this case, we must have some account of this kind, so 'tis a very material character of the Credibility of this History of *Moses*, that it agrees exactly with all this.

FOR in this History of *Moses*, we are no sooner told of our First Parents Sin, and the Death they were thereby expos'd to, but we are likewise told of their Preservation: But lest this Preservation should encourage them to sin,

First, FOR the Prevention of their future disobedience, we read, that they were left to bear the Ill Effects of their past transgression, and for that purpose, as they were now become Mortal, they were shut out from the Tree of Life, *lest they should eat of it and * Live.* And,

Secondly,

* 'Tis worth our observation in this place, that as the End of all God's dispensations to Mankind is their Happiness, which does not only require the Perfection and Holiness of their Rational Nature, but also their well being in respect of their Bodily Circumstances; I say, 'tis worth our observation, that even these acts of severity to our First Parents, were evidently intended for this End.

For the reason of shutting our First Parents out of Paradise, was not only that they might feel the ill effects of their Folly, but that they might not live for ever in that misery they had brought upon themselves.

For since they were now become liable to pains and sicknesses, which would naturally ensue from the change of their constitution, it would have been a sad condition to have lived for ever under those sorrows that would sooner or later naturally happen to them: So that if this Tree was of such a nature, as to keep them from dying, it was a real blessing to be excluded from it.

And so likewise, though the immediate reason of this Curse upon the Ground, which caused it to bring forth Thorns and

Secondly, THAT God might convince them of the great regard he had to the observation of His Laws, and of the little hopes they should have, that a sinner should go unpunished for his sins, we have next an account of the most likely means possible, to give them a lively apprehension of God's displeasure: For,

First, GOD is here not only represented as banishing them from Paradise immediately after their transgression, cursing the very ground for their sakes, causing it to bring forth Thorns and Briars; but He also denounces a Personal judgment on themselves, condemning the Man to Labour, and the Woman to sorrow and Subjection.

And, *Secondly*, L E S T they should think, that because Death was not executed speedily upon them, there might be some hopes to be exempted from it, He farther assures them of the certainty of their Death, That as sure as they were made of Dust, so surely they should return to Dust.

Thirdly, T O make this more effectual to the prevention of their future disobedience, it is very probable, there was, as shall be shewn hereafter, an Institution of Sacrifices at this very time, and the skins of the beasts to be offered to God, they were appointed to wear for cloathing; the immediate end of which Institution was to preserve a just Idea of their sin, and danger in their minds, because by this means whenever they should put on, or off, or even but look upon their Cloaths, they must be put in mind of the sad State they had brought themselves into, and by the dying Struggles of the Animals they slew, they must not only be taught what was meant by dying, which otherwise they could have no notion of; but also by this means the dread and horror of it must be continually awakened, and kept alive in their thoughts, and they must naturally be afraid of sinning again, lest the repetition of that which brought them under the Certainty of Death at first, should provoke God to a speedy execution of it.

And, *Fourthly*, BECAUSE the Devil was the great contriver, and the fatal instrument of this mischief to Mankind, here is likewise a denunciation of Vengeance against Him, which, as He is represented under the Character of a Serpent, is spoken to him in terms adapted to that Character.

Because Thou hast done this thing, Thou art Cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field: Upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life.

And I will put Enmity between Thee and the Woman, between Thy seed, and Her seed: It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Gen. iii. 14, 15.

WHICH words, though spoken as to a Serpent, I conceive to relate only to the Devil; And whereas it is said, that he shall go upon his belly, it is probably spoken in relation to the nature of Serpents, which usually raise themselves up to throw themselves upon their prey, or such things as they would annoy; and in this sense the words seem to be intended to express a Condemnation of the Devil to a depress'd and ignoble state; As the subduing of Enemies, that rise up against us, is represented by their crouching on the ground, and *licking the dust?**

A N D as for the other expression, that of bruising the Serpent's Head, as this is the way effectually to destroy that creature, it must, when applied to the devil, denote his destruction: And as the Head is the fountain of Policy and Contrivance, so when the devil's head is said to be bruised, it must naturally denote the destruction of his Works, and the defeating the End of his devices. And as the Heel of a man is an inferior, and, in comparison of the Head, an inconsiderable part, and to be wounded in it, does not ordinarily affect our Life and Happiness, but is capable usually of an easy cure; so when 'tis here said, That the Devil shall wound the Heel of the Seed of the Woman, it must mean, that He shall be able only to do him some inconsiderable mischief, capable of remedy, whilst the wound he himself shall receive from that seed, shall be incurable, and end in his destruction.

and Briars, was, that it might be a token of the divine displeasure against their Sin, yet it was a real act of kindness to them, and their posterity, as it afforded matter of necessary labour, and employment to them, which their circumstances now call'd for, not only for the prevention of Idleness, the bane of Virtue, but the health and well-being of their bodies, now subject to various sicknesses and diseases.

* *If. lxv. 25. Mic. vii. 17. If. xlix. 23. Ps. lxxii. 9. xviii. 45, &c.*

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Burnett.

THIS seems to be the natural meaning of these Expressions, and they were probably spoken in opposition to the several aims the Devil might have had in engaging in this wicked enterprize; as they might likewise be intended for the comfort of our First Parents, in that melancholy State they were now fallen into: So that,

First, WHEREAS it had been threaten'd to our First Parents, that in the day they should eat of the forbidden Fruit, they should be sure to die, it is not improbable, that the Devil might imagine, that upon the very first Act of disobedience, they should be destroy'd: And therefore, as He thought to have made an End of this whole Species at once; so 'tis here implicitly promised, in opposition to this vain imagination, that the Woman should live to have Seed, and so his hopes should be defeated in this respect. And,

Secondly, WHEREAS he seduced the Woman into sin and misery, under a specious pretence of Friendship, intending, at the same time, nothing but her ruin; in opposition to this, A war is here declared against the Devil and his Seed (that is, all Evil Spirits, and Evil Men, in Scripture-language frequently stiled the Children of the Devil) which should end in the ruin of them, and their Devices: And,

Thirdly, WHEREAS the particular Policy of the Devil in this First temptation, was by drawing them into sin, and under the wrath of God, to bring them under a certainty of death, and thereby deprive them of that Happiness they were made for; so in opposition to this, since 'tis here said, That the Devil's Policy shall be defeated, by the Seed of the Woman, here is necessarily implied a positive promise, That in, and through this seed, some means should be provided, whereby Mankind should be reconciled to God, and taken into His Favour, and being freed from that State of Sin, and all the sad consequences of it, which the Devil had brought them into, *viz.* Imperfection, Death, and Misery, they should be restored to a State of Holiness, Perfection, and everlasting Happiness:

AND by consequence, though they were at present sure to die, yet through the Power of this Promised seed they be Raised again.

ALL this is naturally implied in these words, that he should bruise the Serpent's Head; for by nothing less than this, could the Devil's Head, that is, his Policy and Devices against Mankind, be defeated, and brought to nought.

AND if so, as we see this Promise is what I before shew'd was necessary in our First Parents circumstances, to comfort them under the sense of their Mortality, by assuring them that they should be delivered from it; So we likewise see, that by this Promised Seed must be meant, a Saviour, or Redeemer, who should be born into the world, and, as such, should procure for Mankind, *Forgiveness of Sin, The Resurrection of the Body, and Life Everlasting.*

AND 'tis worth our observation, that if we find this promise, at any time afterwards renewed, we must suppose the assurance of all these Privileges virtually implied in it, and renewed with it: And if we shall hereafter observe a particular desire in Mankind to have this Promis'd Seed descend from them, it must arise very probably from some apprehension they had, that they should thereby be more eminently interested in the Promise, and be in a more especial manner intitled to the great Blessings of it.

IF then these things be allow'd to be credible, and this the meaning of the Promise, what better provision could there be in Reason for this great End of Providence, The prevention of future disobedience, and the encouragement of Virtue and Holiness, than this?

WHAT could be more effectual to convince them, that God was not regardless of his Laws, than to see their past transgression so severely punish'd? And what stronger motive could they have to a strict observance of their duty, than to be assur'd, that, if they lived thus, they should still be capable of Life and Happiness?

THE sense of the sad condition they had brought themselves into, must necessarily have filled their souls with the utmost sorrow and dejection, and we may naturally conceive, that there was nothing, which they would not readily have submitted

submitted to, to make themselves capable of a Remedy: And when they found *Burnett.* this Remedy provided for them by the Goodness of the God they had offended, 'tis not hard to conceive what raptures of Joy and Gratitude it must excite in their hearts, and what effect it must have had upon their lives:

BUT if, over and above all this, it shall appear, as I shall hereafter endeavour to prove, That this general Promise was not only particularly explained to our First Parents, but God, upon the giving them this Promise, enter'd into Covenant with them for the Performance of it on His part, upon the Condition of Faith, and Obedience on theirs, and not only seal'd this Covenant by Sacrifice, but appointed the use, and observation of such Sacrifices, as a Sacramental Sign, and Seal of the Benefits they were to expect by this Promis'd Redeemer, when He should come; as we Christians celebrate our Sacrament, for the same purposes, since His coming; If, I say, this shall appear, and that too from this very History, here was such a provision made against Sin, as that there seems to be no room for future guilt, so far as Reason could be wrought upon.

FOR as it must be the greatest comfort in the world to the dejected sinners labouring under the sense of what they had lost, and the fear of that terrible Death they lookt for, to be assur'd of being deliver'd from it into Everlasting Happiness, so no stronger motive, or encouragement could be given to persuade them effectually to a Holy Life, than to have it made the condition of everlasting Life, and the remembrance of this continually kept up by the frequent returns of Sacrifice.

NOW that there was some Explanation made of this Great Promise of a Saviour, and of the method of Redemption by Him, we have very strong reason to think, even from this very History, and that from several very remarkable Indications. As,

A Covenant made with our First Parents of Faith and Obedience.

First, IN the very next Chapter after this Promise, (*Gen. iv.*) we read of Sacrifices; Of *Abel's* offering a Lamb, which, according to *Moses's* Style in that case, must be understood, of his sacrificing a Lamb, and offering the Blood of it to God.

NOW this could have no foundation in Reason. For upon what probable grounds could bare Reason have suggested, that a Good God would be pleas'd with that, which, unless he had appointed it for some wise ends of His Providence, appears to be full of horror and cruelty? Or, that He would be honour'd by the destruction of his Creatures? Or, that He could be pleas'd with shedding Blood, (and that too of the most innocent and useful of His Creatures) when he had implanted in Humane Nature so great an abhorrence to it, that we cannot do it without reluctance and pity, till custom has worn off our natural tenderness.

BUT beside all this, we have already shewn*, that the killing of Beasts was not the dictate of Reason, but must have had its Original from Revelation, unless necessity can be suppos'd to have oblig'd men to it for Food, for want of other suitable supplies; But this cannot be imagin'd, in our First Parents days, so soon at least, as we read of it: For we are told immediately after the Fall, that our First Parents were cloathed in the Skins of Beasts, and that God appointed them to be used in that manner, (which must be the meaning of His making them Coats of Skins:) And since every thing was made Perfect in its kind, as we cannot suppose any thing should die naturally, so soon at least after the Creation; so we must conclude, that those Beasts were put to death by the order and appointment of God: And since we so early read of Sacrifices, 'tis natural to conceive, that the first killing of Beasts might have had its Original from that Institution, and that that Institution was ordained just after the Fall, from whence our First Parents took those Skins for cloathing.

I SAY, 'tis natural to conceive this from what we have taken notice of; but it will be much more so, if we consider the several wise ends of Providence it might serve.

* P. 447. of the former Treatise.

Burnett.

The Institution of Sacrifices explain'd, and the several reasons of it.

As, *First*, OUR First Parents had been threatned with Death, but what notion could they have of Dying? And therefore 'tis probable this Institution was intended to excite and preserve in their minds a lively sense of what was meant by Death, and what they must expect for their transgression.

But, *Secondly*, As they had the Menace of Death for their Disobedience, so they had the Promise of a Redeemer to deliver them from it, and 'tis very reasonable to suppose this early Institution might have some relation to this Promise: For if it shall appear hereafter, that this Redemption from Death was to be effected by the Death of the Promis'd Seed, and that This Death would be accepted by God, as an Atonement, thro' which they should be restored to the favour of God, and rendered capable of everlasting Happiness, it is more than probable, that this Institution of Sacrifices might be appointed in remembrance of this Sacrifice of this Promis'd Seed.

FOR since 'tis evident through the whole course of the Scripture, that God did not intend this Promis'd Redeemer should appear in the world, 'till many ages after the Promise made, 'tis very reasonable to imagine, that He would appoint some means to keep up the remembrance of Him; And if the method of this Redemption was to be by his Death, there is nothing more natural than to suppose, That this Institution of Sacrifices was ordained by God for this end, namely, as a Sacramental sign and representation which the world was to observe in the Faith, and Expectation of the Death, and Sacrifice of the Promis'd Saviour to come, as Christians celebrate the Christian Sacrament, in remembrance of that Death and Sacrifice already past.

THIS is a very easy account of this Institution, and we have very little reason to doubt the truth of it; but especially when it is confirmed by the New Testament, (if it be allow'd to be of any credit) that this was the Great End of those other Sacrifices appointed afterwards by *Moses*. But this is not all;

WE may further observe, that since this Promis'd Saviour was not to come into the world, 'till after many ages, as appears in the sequel of this History, there was a necessity of some assurance to be given, and carefully to be kept in remembrance, that the virtue of His future Death and Sacrifice, however distant from their time, should be as effectually convey'd to all ages before His coming, as to those, who should live to see Him come; for otherwise they must naturally be apt to suspect, whether they should have any Benefit by Him.

NOW to assure them of this, might be another end of this Institution of Sacrifices; and as the method of God's declaring His acceptance of Sacrifices, was by Fire from Heaven to consume them, so whenever they should find their Sacrifices thus accepted, it was to be look'd upon by them, as an Assurance from Heaven of the favour of God towards them, and of their Reconciliation, and Acceptance with Him through the Death and Sacrifice of the Saviour to come.

AND if so, this Institution was intended not only as a Sacramental Sign, and Commemoration, but also as a Sacramental Seal, and outward Pledge, to assure the world of all the Benefits of the Sacrifice of the Promis'd Redeemer 'till His coming; as the Christian Sacrament is a means of doing this to all the several ages since his coming. What can be more rational than this? And if this be so, what can be more irrational, on the other hand, than to imagine that God should appoint an Institution for such Great Ends and Purposes as these, and yet should give Mankind no account of the meaning of it, when the fulfilling these Ends, did intirely depend upon their being informed of them?

ALL this therefore we have reason to conclude might be Reveal'd to our First Parents.

Secondly, THERE was another Use of Sacrifices related in this History of *Genesis*, which will give us reason to believe, there was some further Revelation to our First Parents, than the bare Promise of a Saviour; and that is, they were used to seal and confirm Covenants: And if so, since we see in several parts of the Scripture-History, that it was the frequent method of God's treating with

Mankind,

Mankind, to enter into Covenant with them by Sacrifice, it is very probable, *Burnett*, that God might enter into Covenant with our First Parents upon giving this Promise, and this Institution be used as a Seal of that Covenant, as our Sacrament is a Seal of our Christian Covenant.

WE do not indeed particularly read of any such Covenant with them; but yet we are not without something that looks that way: For in that place, where we read of a Covenant first, the words are such as seem to imply something of this nature: It is in the case of *Noah*, where God is represented, as saying to him, *Behold I will establish my Covenant with thee*: In which expression the words *My Covenant*, do naturally betoken some Covenant then known to be formerly made with some Other, which should be renewed and confirmed with Him;

AND if so, when can we in Reason imagine That Covenant to have been struck, or with whom so well, as with our First Parents, upon the giving this Promise of a Saviour?

FOR what can be more reasonable than that when God promises a Favour to sinners, in relation to their Happiness, He should do it upon such conditions, as are necessary to be performed, in order to their Happiness; and what time can be more seasonable to prescribe the Conditions, than when He makes the Promise?

FROM hence we may conclude, That when God made this Promise of a Redeemer to Mankind, He did it upon some conditions to be performed by them; and that for the performance of these conditions, He entered into Covenant with them, and sealed that Covenant by Sacrifice.

THIS conclusion seems to me very natural, and if it could be reasonably doubted, whether there was any such formal Covenant, or not, yet there is further evidence from this very History, that there was some certain conditions required by God, in order to acceptance with him.

FOR in this very place where we read of Sacrifices first, we find the two Brothers offerings were not equally approved; *Abel's* was accepted, and *Cain's* rejected.

CAIN being moved with Indignation at this, God is represented as reasoning the matter with him, *If thou dost well, shalt not thou be accepted?* says he; *but if not, Sin lieth at thy door.*

WHICH words are a plain appeal to Himself, whether he did not know what would recommend him to God's acceptance; and whether he had not been wanting in it.

WHAT this was, is here in general express'd by *Well-doing*, and as that must at least betoken the doing one's Duty, so we must conclude, that this was one known condition of acceptance. But this does not seem to have been all;

FOR we find no want of duty in *Cain's* case; As he was a Tiller of ground, he made an Offering suitable to his Employment of the fruits of the field; a very proper acknowledgment of God's Goodness to him, and Authority over him, as likewise of his own Duty and Dependance; And yet he was not accepted, and that too, as is implied, because he did not *do well*.

AND therefore there must have been something further required, to make his Duty acceptable, which he is here supposed to have known, and yet was wanting in; and what that was, is the Question:

MOSES says nothing of it here, but the New Testament, if it be allow'd of any Authority, directs to it as plainly as possible.

FOR it expressly says, By Faith *Abel* offered a more excellent, or (as the margin) a more acceptable Sacrifice than *Cain*, *Heb. xi.*

THAT *Cain's* Sacrifice therefore was not accepted, was for want of Faith; and since he is accused of sin for want of it, as sin is a transgression of a law, it is thence evident, that Faith had been enjoined, as a Condition of acceptance with God:

AND that it was so, and that too by way of Covenant, they, who allow the Authority of the New Testament may be further informed from the same chapter to the *Hebrews* (v. 7.) where *Noah* is said to become Heir of the Righteousness, which is by Faith; that is, according to St. *Paul's* phrase, of the Covenant of Righteousness by Faith, or that Covenant formerly made with our First Parents, the Condition of which was Righteousness, or the Obedience of Faith. THESE

Burnett. THESE are the Reasons upon which, I conceive, there was something more reveal'd to our First Parents after their transgression, than that dark Promise, *That the Seed of the Woman shall bruise the Serpent's head*: And that as God gave them this Promise, so He likewise explained it to them; as He intended this Promise should be fulfilled by the Sacrifice of this seed of the Woman, but not 'till many ages after, so He instituted Sacrifices as a Sacramental sign, and commemoration, and a pledge to assure them of the Benefits of it; which Benefits were, as we have shewn, a deliverance from that Death the Devil had drawn them into, by a Resurrection of the Body to a State of Everlasting Happiness: And because they could not be Happy without being Holy, that they might be capable of receiving Benefit by this Sacrifice, He enters into Covenant with them upon the condition of Righteousness by Faith, that is, That they would do their duty in the belief, and expectation of this Promised Redeemer, and hope for acceptance only thro' him.

THAT all this was Reveal'd to our First Parents, I think is hardly capable of doubt, after what we have here urg'd in proof of it; and therefore tho' this Promise that was made to them, seems dark and intricate to us at this distance, who have it so imperfectly deliver'd to us, yet it was not so, we see, to them, who had it so fully, and so clearly Reveal'd to them.

Why the Promise of a Saviour was so darkly express'd.

THE Reason, why *Moses* did not mention this Revelation, by which this Promise was so fully explained, might probably be, because it was a thing universally known in his time, either by writing or tradition: And since he visibly intended this first part of his History, only as an Introduction to the affairs of his own time, (because 'till he comes to them, he gives us only some general hints of some of the more remarkable transactions) whatever explication had been given of this Promise before, if it was universally then received, and understood, 'twas enough for him in a general History, for the carrying on the thread of his design, to make mention only of the general Promise, the meaning of which, as they had kept to his time, so he had no reason to suspect they would forget; And that not only as being a concern of that vast importance to Mankind, that every one was equally obliged in Interest as well as Duty, not only to know, but to remember it; but especially when they had an Institution of Sacrifices on purpose to keep up the remembrance of it.

IF then there was such an Explication of this Promise, as seems to appear from these observations, this must give a great addition of Credibility to this History:

FOR we cannot imagine any method of Providence more suitable to our First Parents Circumstances, and more proper to prevent their after disobedience, and maintain the Honour and Authority of God, as a Lawgiver, than this Revelation of a Saviour so explained to them; And therefore as this History so far agrees with our Reason, we have so far Reason to believe it true: And if so, from hence many important consequences will follow, which will open a new Scene before us, and give us a further view into various Revelations afterward, that Mankind would some time or other stand in need of, and which we may reasonably expect to find some account of in any regular History of Providence.

The necessity of various Revelations.

As *First*, IF it be true, as we have shewn, That upon the First act of sin, God made a Promise to our First Parents of a Saviour, or Redeemer, who should destroy the Work, and defeat the Policy of the Devil, by which he hoped to have brought them into ruin; And this was a Promise of so great importance to them, that upon this all their hopes of Happiness depended, as containing in it the assurance of Forgiveness of Sins, the Resurrection of the Body, and Life everlasting; So it was, by consequence, of the highest importance to them, that this Promise should be kept in memory:

AND as we cannot conceive the Providence of God, which orders all things for the Happiness of the world, would be wanting in any necessary means of its

Preservation,

Preservation, so 'tis very reasonable to expect, in any Authentick History of Antient times, several methods made use of for this purpose, according as there should be occasion for them.

Secondly, SINCE so much depended upon this Promise, and yet here is nothing said, who the Person should be, nor of the time when he should come; As 'tis natural to conceive on the one hand, that every family would hope, He might descend from them; so on the other hand, if it shall appear that He was not to come, 'till several ages after the Promise made, there seems to be a necessity in the nature of the thing, that there should be, some time or other, some Information given of the determinate Time, when he should come, as likewise some Marks and Characters of Him, whereby he should be known, when he should come; that is, there is a necessity of various Prophecies from time to time, in which provision should be made for these things. And,

Thirdly, SINCE there is one character here given of Him in the Promise itself, that He should be the Seed of the Woman, if it shall hereafter appear, that by this expression was to be understood, that He should be the Seed of the Woman only, without the concurrence of a Man, 'tis natural to conceive, that some time or other, some means should be provided for the Examination of this matter, and the certain proof of His being so. And,

Fourthly, SINCE this Promise was of so great importance, 'tis natural to conceive, that all Mankind, at all times after, would be eager for its completion, and 'tis very probable, they would flatter themselves with hopes of His coming sooner, than it might be intended He should come: And by this means, as they must meet with continual disappointments, which would naturally make them uneasy, and impatient of Expectation, and so tempt them to lay aside their hopes, there seems a necessity, in the nature of the thing, of a frequent repetition, and confirmation of this Promise, to revive, strengthen, and support their hopes; and the longer it was before His coming, so much the oftener ought this Repetition to be made: And by consequence we may conclude, that if there has been any Revelation of this kind, there have been many, according as it shall appear this Promise was, sooner or later, to be fulfilled.

AND if so, then a History of Providence must not only be a History, as I observed before, of the Rise and Progress of sin, and of proper methods taken for the prevention of it, but also of various Revelations and Prophecies relating to the Promised Seed, if He was not to be born, 'till a distant time.

AND by consequence, as we can have no regular, consistent, credible History of Providence, without some account of such Prophecies and Revelation; So it will be a particular Mark of the Credibility of the Scripture History, that it agrees in all these respects:

So that, as it relates the Promise of a Redeemer made, who, as it appears by the History, was not to come, 'till many ages after the making that Promise, so it not only gives us an account of various Prophecies, and Revelations, but a natural succession of them, and those too such Prophecies and Revelations, as the nature of the Promise of a Redeemer required, and the necessities of Mankind, at different times, might in reason be supposed to call for. That the Scripture answers in all this, shall be hereafter shewn in its proper place.

C H A P. IV.

The method of the Divine Providence after the first sin.

LET us now proceed where we left off, and as we have before considered the Origin of Sin, and How Mankind became liable to Death, and How far our First Parents were capable of Preservation, after they had sinn'd, and the necessity of various Revelations upon that account, and the exact provision that was made accordingly;

Burnett. So let us now, in the next place, inquire, What effect these Revelations had upon mankind according to this History.

As the First and Great end of God's Providence in His dealings with Sinners, as such, is the Prevention of Sin, Sin being the only thing that can destroy their Happiness, the Question is, Whether these Revelations vouchsafed to our First Parents, had that effect upon them, as to prevent all after-sin, or not; And if not, then we must enquire, What account this History gives us of them; what their circumstances, and occasions were from time to time; and what Methods of Providence they or their Children might stand in need of; and whether it tells us of any suitable provision made.

As for our First Parents, How they might be wrought upon by what was done in their case, we do not know: But 'tis natural to conceive, considering their Circumstances, that it might have had a proper Influence upon them: And accordingly this History makes no mention of any after-transgression on their part.

BUT as for their Children, we soon find it otherwise: We presently read of Sin in our First Parents Family, and that too of a very heinous nature, viz. of one Brother's murdering another, because the offering of the one was better accepted, than that of the other.

WHY this should occasion such an unnatural resentment, we are not told: It has been thought, that it had its foundation in, and arose from the Promise of a Redeemer, the Elder suspecting, that the preference of the Younger's offering might be an argument of his greater favour with God, and that this might create a Jealousy of his greater Interest in the Promise on that account.

BUT whatever the reason of the Fact might be, it was of so heinous a Nature in itself, and of such dangerous consequence to the world at that time, that there seems a necessity of some Method to be taken, suitable to the Nature of the Case. It is very reasonable to imagine, that such a Fact should not go without some proper Punishment; but Reason does not tell us, what that Punishment should be.

DEATH had been already threatned to sin, but Death does not seem so natural a Vengeance, whilst the world was yet so very small; and yet some exemplary Vengeance might justly be expected, for the prevention of future transgressions of that kind, which were more especially to be prevented then, whilst the world was to be peopled by so small a Number.

AND therefore as we may expect some account of this nature, in a credible and consistent History of Providence relating to this particular Fact, so this History of *Moses* agrees accordingly, and tells us of a suitable Provision, and Revelation made: *Cain* is not put to death immediately, but preserved to feel the fruits of his Iniquity in the natural stings of his guilty Conscience, The Ground is curs'd for his sake, and he, and his family are Banish'd from the Society of those, whom God intended to favour with his Presence.

THIS was a severe and afflictive Punishment, and an Exemplary token of God's displeasure: And this, 'tis probable, our First Parents understood as a total exclusion of him, and his Posterity from any pretence to the Great Promise of a Saviour, so far at least, that he should not hope to have him descend from any of them.

THIS notion so far prevail'd in the family of *Seth*, that they apply'd themselves more particularly to the Service of God, and were so confident that this Promise was to be fulfilled in them, that they set a mark of distinction on themselves upon that account; and as we Christians, who are in Possession of what they hoped for, have the Privilege to be called *The sons of God*, so they, this History says, distinguished themselves by the same title of *the sons, and children of God*, in opposition to the Posterity of *Cain*, whom they reproachfully stil'd *the sons and daughters of men*, Gen. vi.

AND upon this notion, this Family of *Seth* seems to have kept themselves a separate people.

W H E T H E R this separation was injoin'd them at that time, it is not said ; but as *Cain*, and his Posterity were banish'd into another Country, it does not seem consistent with that punishment, to leave the rest of the world at liberty, to converse with them, and because their promiscuous marriages, and commerce with them, was afterwards said to be one reason of the Flood, it seems thereby to be implied, that this was one part of their disobedience, and by consequence, that God had commanded a separation. Burnett.

The necessity of an Universal Destruction shewn.

I N obedience to this command, and in Faith of the Expected Promise, this Family, I say, kept themselves a long time a Separate and Holy people ; but afterwards, in process of time, they grew weary of this separation, and regardless of the Promise, and having no concern for their duty to God, or the expected Happiness of a better life, they fell away into an Universal licentiousness and depravation ; insomuch that these *sons of God*, as they called themselves, *when they saw the daughters of men*, that is, of *Cain*, that they were *Fair*, promiscuously mixed, and married with them, 'till they were universally blended with that Accursed Seed ; so that if that Seed was to be excluded from the Promise, there was now a necessity, in the reason of the thing, of excluding the whole world with them.

A N D as this Extraordinary change of things, begat a Necessity of some new method of Providence suitable to this occasion, which we may expect to hear of in a Credible History, so we are here told of a New Revelation made to declare God's Intention to destroy them all.

Various means of Reformation tried before the Deluge.

B U T before the world came to this forlorn condition, we cannot conceive, but something had been done for the prevention of this wickedness from time to time. *Moses* indeed says nothing of it, because this part of his History seems only to be intended to give us some general imperfect Hints of things, well known in those days, as an Introduction to the account of his own Mission.

B U T the New Testament (if it be allowed to be of any Authority) tells us of Various methods taken, of diverse *Prophets*, of which *Noah* was the *Eighth*, sent to preach Righteousness to them ; *Enoch* is said to have *prophefied* of a Day of Vengeance, when God would execute wrath upon the wicked ; and for an Encouragement to those, that would be dutiful to God, he himself was taken away alive, and carried to a better world, not only as an Evidence of a future state, but that God would be a *Rewarder of those that diligently seek him*.

A N D with these, and perhaps many other external means of Reformation, 'tis intimated to us, that God was not wanting in any Inward Assurances of His Holy Spirit ; For 'tis said, *His Spirit* had been all along *striving with men*.

B U T when all these means were ineffectual, and the general corruption had run to such a height, that the world was fill'd with violence, without any possibility of Reformation, their iniquities being full, and ripe for vengeance, then 'tis said, God sent the Flood upon the whole world of the Ungodly, sparing only *Noah*, and his Family, and such a number of Creatures of every kind, as His Wisdom thought fit to be preserved.

T H I S is the account we have from *Moses*, and as this is a very rational account, so 'tis obvious to every understanding, that according to this State of things, there were several new Revelations necessary, with which this History agrees exactly :

Several new Revelations necessary at the Deluge.

As, *First*, 'T I S evident, if the world was to be destroy'd by a Flood, and God had determin'd, that *Noah* should be Preserved, 'twas necessary, in the nature of the thing, that he should be timely informed of it, and instructed in the means of his Preservation ; And accordingly we are told of a Revelation given him, with Instructions to provide himself an Ark or Ship, and the manner how it should be made. And,

Burnett. And, *Secondly*, As the time of going into, and coming out of this Ark, depended intirely on the Will of God, so it could not be known, without His Revelation, and accordingly *Noah* is here said to have received directions.

And, *Thirdly*, WHEN he, and his Family were come out of the Ark, as the face of Nature must be strangely alter'd, lest, from this amazing change, or from the fear of such another vengeance for the future. they might, as 'tis natural to suppose they might, be discourag'd from a necessary industry, suspecting it might be all in vain, this History tells us of a further Revelation, to give them assurance of the contrary; that God would not smite the world in this manner any more, and that *whilst the Earth remains, Seed-time and Harvest, Summer and Winter, &c. should not cease.*

Fourthly, As the world was now reduced to but Eight Persons, since it might be natural enough for them to be afraid, lest, considering the quick Increase of other creatures, they might be over-run, and destroy'd by them; we are here told of a declaration to prevent this Fear, by assuring them, that the dread of them should be upon every living creature, and that they themselves should increase, and multiply exceedingly.

Fifthly, BECAUSE the Fruits of the Earth were now become useless, upon which they before subsisted, or perhaps were not capable of affording a proper nourishment, by the change the Flood had wrought upon the Earth, as there was a Necessity of some other sustenance, so here we read of a direction in this case, and of a liberty granted them to eat Flesh.

But then, *Sixthly*, As they were allowed to feed on Flesh, since they could not thence know, but they must eat it Raw, which might not be a proper nourishment, or might naturally tend to make them Savage, by rendering their spirits rank, and fiery, and apt to be inflamed into Choler and Fierceness, especially having been us'd to a milder, and less nourishing Diet; And because the very killing of the Beasts for food, might likewise tend to the hardening of their hearts, and by degrees train them up to Cruelty, and so make them less averse to Murther, (which would have been of dangerous consequence to the world reduced to so small a Number;) as 'tis natural to conceive there might be, so 'tis here said, there actually was, a Provision made for them in both these respects.

HERE's a Positive Prohibition of eating Blood, and Murther is not only forbidden under the penalty of Death, but lest they should hope to escape the Execution, every one is commanded, and required to avenge it, even upon Beast as well as Man.

And, *Lastly*, BECAUSE Mankind might, as 'tis natural to conceive they would, (after the late destruction of the world by Water) be under terrible apprehensions for the future, and apt to be affrighted at the prospect of rainy Weather, lest it should end in the like devastation, 'tis reasonable to expect from the Goodness of God, that he would satisfy their minds in this particular.

AND accordingly we are told of an Assurance given, that God would not destroy them in this manner any more, and that he made the appearance of the Rainbow in the Clouds, a standing Memorial of his Promise: And 'tis worth our Observation to consider the Wisdom, and Goodness of God in this particular, that he should make this the standing Token of their safety, which, in the nature of things, would ordinarily be presented to them at that time, when they would probably have the greatest apprehension of danger.

THUS we see how exactly this History agrees; how consistent it is with itself, and with the Nature, and Reason of things; So that if we can suppose, as we cannot reasonably deny, but that the Circumstances of Mankind may have been, what this History relates they were, we cannot but allow that there is a particular suitableness in these several Revelations, and methods of Providence to those circumstances, that were the Occasions of them.

C H A P V.

The necessary Methods of Providence to the New World.

THUS far then we have cleared our way, and as we are now come to the beginning of the New world, we are here to enquire how it fared with them, and what might be necessary in their case, either for the incouragement of Obedience, or the prevention of Sin, or the preservation of a due Faith in the Promised seed, and the several great Advantages comprehended under it. Burnett.

As for the two former of these Ends, the Incouragement of Obedience, and the Prevention of Sin, we cannot in reason think any thing could be more effectual, or that any thing further could be necessary, after such a remarkable difference made between the Righteous and the Wicked in the Preservation of the Righteous *Noah*, and his Family, whilst the whole world of the Ungodly were destroyed, and therefore we read of no other means at that time, for those ends than this:

BUT as to the Promise of a Saviour, the hinge upon which all their hopes depended, and the whole comfort of their lives was built, we may expect to read of something more: We have already observed, that the Tradition of this Promise was so far weakened in the Old world, that it was upon this account probably; they did no longer keep themselves a Separate, and Holy people, but followed their own Irregular Inclinations, and therefore went in unto the *Daughters of Men*, the Banished seed of *Cain*; and therefore it is not improbable, but that upon the Beginning of the New world, there might be some Revelation of that kind made, to strengthen, and support their Faith in this Promise.

THE belief of this Promise was so far sunk even in the Family of *Noah*, that the sin imputed by this History to *Ham* (of his seeing his Father's Nakedness in his tent, when he had been surprized into an over-charge of wine, and his going to tell his brothers of it) is generally understood by the *Jewish* Rabbies, of something done in derision of this Promise.

IT is evident there is nothing in the thing itself, considered simply, but may be understood in a very good sense, but since we see it so severely punish'd, it must have something worse in it, than we are able to apprehend at this distance, under this imperfect relation of it: But if it was done, as 'tis usually interpreted, by way of Scoff at this Promise, it was then a Crime of a high Nature, as arising from a spirit of Infidelity, in a Matter of the last Importance to Mankind; and upon this account, lest any one should be incouraged to follow his example, 'tis worth our Observation, that he and his Posterity are here set forth, as severely Punish'd by God for it:

ISAY, Punish'd by God: Because what is here said to be spoken by *Noah*, is to be understood as Reveal'd to him by God; Because he not only knew when he awaked, what had been done when he was asleep, but the Curse he denounced upon it, was afterward literally fulfilled in the Event.

AND whilst we consider *Noah* as a Prophet, which this History represents him to be, from hence we may understand what he said of *Shem*, as a Revelation of God spoken in a Prophetick way, for the support of the Faith in the Promis'd Seed, as we have already observed, might reasonably be expected at that time.

THE words are, *Blessed be the Lord God of Shem*. In which words, when *Noah* speaks of the *Lord*, as *God of Shem*, it must be understood, according to the Scripture Phraseology, in the same sense, that the same expression is us'd in, when the *Lord* is called *The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, and by consequence it must intimate to us, that *Shem* and his Posterity might look upon themselves, as favoured by God in the same manner, that *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob* afterward were; that is, that they were to be the depositaries of this Promise: And if so, here is a manifest token of a Revelation from God to keep up the Faith in the Promis'd seed: And how briefly soever it is here delivered in a History only of General Hints, yet as it is reasonable to think it must have been

Burnett. very well understood by *Noah*, so it is very probable, it was more fully explained by him.

To have their hopes thus confirmed again to them, was a very great motive to Obedience; but whether it had this effect, or not, we are not told:

WE have reason to think it had not, but that Mankind, notwithstanding this, and all that God had done, soon degenerated into Wickedness: To prevent the progress, and increase of which, was, probably, the reason of that Great Event, that we presently read of in this History, *viz.* the confusion of Languages; and in consequence of that, the dispersion of Nations.

The reason of the Confusion of Languages.

FOR 'tis very evident that it was in its very nature particularly adapted to this End: as we shall see, if we consider the Occasion of it.

THE immediate occasion of this Strange Providence was, as it is related in this History, the building of the Tower of *Babel*, which seems to be a design attempted by *Nimrod*, the Grandson of *Ham*, and the rest of that Branch of *Noah's* Family, probably in opposition to the Judgment he denounced against them, that they should be subject to their Brethren.

FOR 'tis rational to conceive, that this Prediction would naturally prompt them to provide against it, not only by consulting their own security, but by bringing their Brethren, if they could, into absolute subjection to themselves: And for this reason, 'tis probable, they might begin this Tower, not only for their own defence, in defiance of Heaven, in respect of the Curse denounced against them, but also as the Centre of Union to their Family, and the seat of that Universal Empire, which they perhaps might hope to make themselves Masters of.

AND if so, then as here was a necessity in the nature of things, if this Prediction of *Noah* was reveal'd by God, that he should interpose for their defeat, for the Vindication of his own Honour and Veracity; so there could be no way more effectual to convince them, that their defeat was effected by the Hand of God, than this strange confusion of their Languages, which as it could not be brought about, but by absolutely forming their minds anew, erasing all their former Ideas, and imprinting others, in an Instant, in their room, and must therefore be wrought by a divine Power; so, one would think it should awaken them into a serious sense of their folly and madness, in opposing his Will in any kind, and how much it was their Interest to live in all duty and obedience to him.

BUT when we further consider, that these Builders, who were of the Posterity of *Ham*, were not only a very wicked race of people, that wanted to be awakened into a sense of their duty, but might likewise be of dangerous consequence to the rest of Mankind, by their Ill Principles and Examples, whilst they continued intermix'd with them, there seems a necessity of some means to prevent this, lest the world should be reduced to the same state of Universal depravation, that it was in before the Flood; so we read of a provision made for this, not only by the confusion of their language, but the dispersion of the people. And 'tis worth our Observation, How apt an Instance this is, of the Wisdom, as well as the Power of God, whilst we see it amazingly fitted in every respect, for the compassing this great End, above what it was possible for Human reason to have imagined. For,

The dispersion of Nations, and the reasons of it.

First, BY this, here is a separation made of the wicked Family of *Ham* from the rest of the world, that they should not be corrupted by them; And lest a local separation should not serve the turn, because they might come together again, as the Families of *Cain* and *Seth* had done; Here is,

Secondly, A Confusion of Languages amongst them, which would naturally hinder all intercourse and communication, not only with the Posterity of *Shem* and *Japhet*, but even among themselves, excepting with such, as should speak the same Language: And,

Thirdly,

Thirdly, As they who spake the Same Language, would naturally associate *Burnett*, together, so there must by consequence be, as many distinct Societies, as there were different languages; And the more divisions there were, whatever part was infected, the less could their corruption spread, whilst there could be no easy Communication between them: And,

Fourthly, As these several societies, must necessarily form themselves into so many distinct Governments under their several Heads, so these several Governments must naturally contribute very much to the restraint of Wickedness: Because by this means all Mankind must necessarily be kept under a stricter Regulation; and greater care must be taken in every society of the manners of their subjects, than could possibly have been done, had the whole world continued under one Great Empire.

AND besides, the very Jealousies and Emulations that must arise between Nation and Nation, the necessity of defending themselves one against another, and the ambition of equalling or out-doing one another, must be a great means to restrain men from publick Vices, and a Spur to many Great and Noble virtues.

Lastly, THIS division of Nations was a very wise means of Providence for the more natural, and more equal Punishment of sin; For when any Nation, or People should become Wicked, here was no need of any Immediate Correction from above; but by this means one people might be made to punish another, without the destruction of either: And when any People should become Incurable, God by this means, could destroy them, without hurting the rest, and one Nation might be made a Warning to the * rest.

So that upon the whole, we see, nothing could be better fitted in the nature of things to answer the great End of Providence in the Prevention of sin, and the promotion, and encouragement of Virtue, than this Confusion of Languages, and Dispersion of Nations was: And therefore there can be no room to doubt the Credibility of this History thus far.

What happened after the Dispersion of Nations.

WHAT happened immediately upon this dispersion, this History is altogether silent in: Only in general we may observe, that notwithstanding this, in *Ham's* Posterity, Wickedness soon grew to a vast Bulk, and though we do not read in what manner it increas'd, nor what particular Providences were exercised towards them, yet it soon advanced to such a fatal Maturity, as to call for a speedy and exemplary Vengeance, which was executed on *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, and the neighbouring Cities, in Fire, and Brimstone.

I HAVE already observed, that it was not the method of Providence in the old world, to proceed to extremity at first, but as he tried various methods for their Reformation, before he would bring the Flood upon them, 'tis very probable, he might have done so in this case, though this History says nothing of it:

FOR it seems to be the main design of *Moses*, to carry on the Succession of the Family of *Shem*, as the Branch, from which the Messiah was to come, and therefore he takes little notice of any thing but what relates to them.

BUT how wicked soever the Posterity of *Ham* might be, who from the very first, lay under the Curse of God, *Gen. ix. ver. 25.* yet one would naturally expect to find it otherwise in the Family of *Shem*, who were so remarkably favour'd by him, as that He was called, by way of Excellence, *The God of Shem*. This, together with the many other motives to Obedience, they had in common with the rest of the world, one would think should have wrought powerfully on them, and one would expect to find them a very Holy, and Exemplary People.

AND yet soon after *Noah's* Death, something more than four hundred Years from the Flood, we find even this Righteous Branch so far degenerated, even into Idolatry †, that there was no natural way of maintaining True Religion in the world, without some new method of Providence for this purpose.

AND since the True Knowledge of the True God, is absolutely necessary to the Happiness of Mankind, because their Happiness consists in being like God,

* See *Dr. Sherlock on Providence.*

† *Job. xxiv. 2.*

Burnett. and by consequence the attainment of it depends upon their forming right notions of Him, we have no reason to doubt, but the Providence of God, which orders all things for the Happiness of the world, would particularly display itself in this extraordinary case, for the recovery and preservation of True Religion, in the Knowledge and Worship of the true God, according as the case required; And we may reasonably expect to find it so in any Credible History of Providence.

The Calling of Abraham, and the reason of it.

AND therefore, when the world was come to such a pass, that they were universally Idolaters, and True Religion in danger of being lost, God is here represented in this History of *Moses*, as calling forth *Abraham* from his country and kindred, to be the Seed of a New, and Better generation: By whom He might raise up to Himself a *peculiar people, zealous of good works*, which people He intended to train up in true Knowledge and Worship of Himself, the only True God, and in the true Faith of that great Instrument and Motive of True Religion and Virtue, the Promise of a Saviour.

AND as he was a Person well dispos'd towards God, this History seems to represent him as set up by God, not only as a Pattern, but as a Guide to succeeding generations: For the reason of the favour of God to him, is said to be, because *He knew that Abraham would command his children and his household, after him, that they keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment*, Gen. xviii. 19. And so both by his example and authority help forward the great end he was chosen for.

THIS seems to be the design of Providence in this dispensation towards *Abraham*, according to this History, and as something of this kind might reasonably be expected, this must be so far a credible History.

BUT yet for the right understanding of this dispensation, we must not think, that it had only an Eye to *Abraham*, and his seed, without any regard to the rest of Mankind, as if God had no concern, either to prevent, or reform the Ignorance, or Idolatry of other nations, so long as True Religion could be preserved among His chosen people.

NO; we may reasonably suppose, that there had been many methods used for this purpose before the calling of *Abraham*, as there likewise probably were many others afterwards, that we are told nothing of.

BUT as the calling of *Abraham* was the greatest and most effectual of all, and is the foundation of the succeeding History, we have a more particular account of this:

AND we must not understand, I say, that this is intended only that God might have a favourite people, to whom He would manifest His love in a more peculiar manner only for their own sakes; but we must consider it, as design'd for the benefit of the whole world, that True Religion being preserved amongst this people, they might be as Leaven to the rest of Mankind, and disperse their knowledge through the whole Creation.

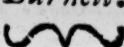
THIS seems to be the design of Providence in this great affair, relating to *Abraham*, and his Posterity. And if so,

LET us, in the next place, see what may reasonably be expected in a History of this Person, and those that should descend from him, considering the End they were chosen for, supposing we had no account of it, and if we find this History agree accordingly, it is so far a consistent and credible History.

C H A P. VI.

What Providences were necessary upon the Calling of Abraham.

LET us, in the first place, consider *Abraham* chosen out from an Idolatrous people to raise up a better generation, to whom he was to be a Guide, and Pattern; 'tis natural to expect in this case, in a Credible History of this man,

man, to find several great instances of a remarkable, and exemplary Piety, and *Burnett.*
Virtue. 

Secondly, As he was called out from his country, and kindred, to travel up and down in strange lands, and among strange people, since this was an enterprize that must necessarily be attended with great difficulties, and dangers, doubts, and fears, violent struggles, and strong temptations ; there seems to be a necessity in the nature of the thing of great motives, and encouragements to be offer'd to him, according as his Circumstances should require, and this may likewise be expected in a History of him.

Thirdly, As he was to be the founder of a New nation, and such a one, as was to be separate from others that they might be kept free from the contagion of their Idolatry, and preserved in the True Religion, 'tis natural to expect in a History of this people, to find an account, how they came to be a Nation ; because 'tis not easy to conceive, how it could be so.

Fourthly, As a Nation cannot subsist without Laws, and Government, and as a Nation separate from all other people, not only in themselves, but their Religion, must be governed in a different manner, and by different laws from other people, so we may expect to be informed of these things, and to meet with some account of their Religion, and Government, and the Laws they were govern'd by.

Fifthly, As the design, and reason of raising up this people as a separate Nation, was, the Preservation of the True Religion for the better Instruction and Reformation of an Idolatrous world, since it is not only necessary in the nature of things, that they should be thoroughly instructed themselves, before they could be Guides to others, but also that their Religion should be kept pure, and undefiled, that it might be so convey'd to others, so we may reasonably expect to read of some proper methods for this purpose.

And, *Lastly*, As their keeping themselves a separate people, must naturally keep their Religion to themselves, and so defeat the end of their separation, unless there were some means to prevent this, by bringing the Knowledge of their Religion to other nations, 'tis reasonable to expect to be informed of some methods taken of this kind.

THESE are all such observations, as are founded in nature, and arise from the very reason, and end of this dispensation ; and if these things may in reason be expected in a general History of this people, so far as any History agrees in this respect, so far 'tis a rational and credible History.

C H A P. VII.

The Credibility of the Mosaic History of Abraham.

LET us now, then, examine the History of *Moses*, and see how it answers with all this.

AND this it does so very exactly, that there is not any one of those forementioned instances, which we have not a particular account of, the whole book being nothing else but a general relation of God's various dealings with *Abraham*, and his seed, 'till they became a Nation ; that is, of such Revelations made, and such Providences exercised towards them from time to time, as their different occasions did require. As for instance,

The first thing required in a History of Abraham, found in Genesis.

First, SINCE *Abraham* was called out from the rest of Mankind, to be a Guide, and Pattern to succeeding ages, as we cannot but suppose him to have been endued with an *Excellent Spirit* to recommend him to so High an Honour, so he is here set forth in this History, as a *Burning and Shining Light* : No sooner is he commanded to part with his Idolatrous kindred, but he submits at the first call, *forfaking Father and Mother, Brethren and Sisters*, teaching his Posterity,

Burnett. rity, by his own Practice, to count all things but dross and dung, in comparison of the Excellency of the Knowledge of the True God, and True Religion. His Constant care to set up Altars for the worship of God, where-ever he went, was an exemplary Proof of his Great sense of God, and his continual dependance on Him, and was very proper to teach his People to set the Lord always before them, and in all their ways to acknowledge Him.

BUT what an amazing Instance of his Faith, and Obedience was that of offering his son, his only son, and the son of Promise, against the softest Bowels of Nature, and the strongest objections of Reason, on a bare belief of the Possibility of his Resurrection, hoping even against Hope? And how lively did he shew by this Example, the Possibility and Necessity of the strictest Obedience, even in the tenderest acts of Self-denial, and of Trust, and Resignation in the hardest Trials?

NOW when we consider this Character of *Abraham*, so agreeable to the Nature, and Will of God, and so suitable to the Work he was chosen for, since Reason tells us, that the *Righteous God must love Righteousness, and His countenance behold the Upright*, 'tis no wonder, that we read of eminent favours, of great, and uncommon Condescension towards Him.

C H A P. VIII.

The second thing required in a History of Abraham.

SECONDLY, As we may expect in a History of *Abraham* to read of Great Motives, and Encouragements to him, according as his Circumstances required, so we here find frequent Promises made him, and such particular Informations given him, as might be requisite either to comfort, and support, or to animate, and spur him on in his Undertaking, according as he had occasion from time to time: As for Instance;

The several Motives and Encouragements God gave to Abraham.

NO sooner had he left his Country, and arrived at the land of *Canaan*, but we are told of a Promise of that Land to his Posterity: But afterwards, when many years had passed, and he saw no probability of this, because he had no Heirs, unless those of his Household were to be accounted so; as 'tis natural to conceive he might be, so this History tells us, that he was, under some dejection, and uneasiness of mind: He might have, 'tis probable, some doubtful reasonings, how to understand this General Promise; how he could become a Nation, and his seed inherit the Land of *Canaan*, when he neither at present had any seed, nor was, to all appearance like to have, (*Gen. xv.*) Now when this was the Encouragement to leave his kindred, and he saw no likelihood of fulfilling this, as there was a necessity in the nature of the thing for some proper assistance in this case, so we read of a suitable Revelation made, to settle, and compose his thoughts, and establish him in the way that he was in: In which he was not only assured in general, that God would be his shield, and exceeding great Reward, but also that he should be the Father of a Numerous, Posterity, descending from his own Bowels, which should as certainly inherit the Promis'd land, as it was the Lord that Promis'd it, and therefore could, and would make it good,

AND that he might have no doubt remaining on his mind, God not only gave him a Sign to confirm all this, by appointing him to provide a Sacrifice, which God shew'd His approbation of, by the passing of a Lamp of Fire between the divided parts of it, but he gives him a view of His whole design, and shews him by what Steps he should become a Nation, and how, and when he should come into that Land: *That his seed should be servants in a land, that was not theirs, and they should be afflicted there 'till the fourth generation, because the Iniquities of the Amorites would not be full 'till then; and then he would Judge that land, and bring them out thence with great substance.*

So

So that here we see a suitable provision made, sufficient to dispel the Fears of *Abraham*, and settle his Faith upon a certain bottom.

BUT yet it is here to be observed, that tho' *Abraham* is assured he shall have Children, that shall descend from his own Body, yet here is nothing said of the time when: And as 'twas natural for him to think in this case, that he should have these Children by his Wife, when he afterwards found, this was naturally impossible, she being past Children in the Course of Nature, this probably begat a New doubt, as to the meaning of this Promise, whether he was to have them by her, or by another; And as this inclin'd *Sarah* to give him her Servant, thinking the Promise could not relate to her, (*Gen. xvi. 2.*) here was now a necessity of a New Revelation to set them both right in this matter. And,

ACCORDINGLY we read of such a Revelation made, wherein, after the repetition of God's former Promises of the Land of *Canaan*, and a Numerous Issue, *Abraham* is assured of a Son by *Sarah*, which Son should be that Blessed seed, in whom all these Promises should centre, and in whom all the Families of the Earth should be Bless'd: By which Words, must apparently be meant, that this Son should be the depositary of that Promise to our First Parents, relating to the Redeemer, who was to bruise the Serpent's head, and defeat all the Devices of the Devil: For as this was the Greatest Blessing that God could bestow on sinful men, and was such a Blessing, as He intended for all Mankind, that would make themselves capable of it, so when 'tis here said, that in this Seed of *Abraham*, by *Sarah*, all Nations of the Earth should be Bless'd, this must naturally be supposed to relate to that Great Blessing, expected from the Promis'd Redeemer, and must be therefore understood, as a further renovation and confirmation of that Promise.

AND for the remembrance, and assurance of all this, He renews His Covenant with *Abraham*, and his Seed, not only promising them the Land of *Canaan*, and that He would be their God; but also obliging them all to be Circumcised, and that not only as a mark, by which they should be distinguished to be his, *Gen. xvii. 8, &c.* but also, probably, as a standing sign, and memorial to them, that God would perform his Covenant with them;

THUS we see what care was taken of *Abraham*, to give him proper aid upon every occasion, as our Reason might expect in a History of him.

WE must not here conceive, that God was all this time regardless of others, and left them to their own Inventions. No; As the world was every day growing worse, and worse, 'tis very reasonable to think, that various methods had been taken to make them better, though we are told nothing of it. This History tells us of an Instance of his Vengeance upon a dissolute, and hardened people in the destruction of several Cities by Fire and Brimstone. This was no doubt intended by God to awaken the careless, and unthinking world into a just sense of His neglected Justice, and to shew them what they might expect from Him, whilst they lived in disobedience to Him.

BUT on the other hand, as God is thus revealing Himself in Judgment on sinners, He remembers mercy to His servants, and as a further Encouragement, and reward to *Abraham*, for his Exemplary Faith and Piety, He condescends to come to him in an Extraordinary way, to reveal to him His Decree against those Cities, and to shew him the Reason, and the Justice of it: And lest he should be terrified by this severity, he lets him know, that He was nevertheless the Lord Merciful and Gracious, and would not only, not destroy the Righteous with the Wicked, but had there been any such amongst them, the Cities should have been saved for their sakes.

THESE are the chief of those many Revelations that God was pleased to vouchsafe to *Abraham*, by which we see how he was assisted from time to time, according as his Circumstances required; And as this is what we might reasonably expect to find in a History of so great a man, chosen out by God for so great an End, this makes the relation very credible.

I MIGHT pursue my observations a little further, and as there is the same reason in some degree for the same assistance afterward, to the children of *Abraham*,

Burnett. *ham*, for carrying on the same design, so I might easily shew how this History answers in this case also: But this would be tedious to the Reader. It is enough that I have shewn the design of the Historian, and how regularly this design is carried on thus far: As for what remains, there can be no difficulty; every one will be able to Judge of it at first sight; and as we are told of several remarkable Providences, and particular Revelations to *Isaac* and *Jacob*, so 'tis easy for any one to account for them, and in some respect to discover the reason of them: However, 'tis plain to every Eye, that there is not any of these Revelations, but is some way or other suited to one, or other of those great ends already mentioned, and is calculated to answer some particular occasion, they might have had at that time for such a dispensation, as they might either want Incouragement, Information, Comfort, or Support in respect either of the True Faith in that Promis'd Seed, or the Knowledge or Practice of True Religion, and Virtue. So that there needs nothing more to be said upon this head.

C H A P. IX.

BUT before I proceed, it may not be amiss, because these several Revelations to *Abraham*, I have mentioned, are the Hinge of the succeeding History, to make some particular remarks upon them, as being such, as will give some confirmation to them, and add a further Credibility to the Relation.

Remarks upon these several Revelations to Abraham.

First, then, As we have observed in general, that God was not wanting to *Abraham* in suitable incouragements according to his several occasions, so we may more particularly take notice, that the first thing offered him of this kind, was, the Promise of the Land of *Canaan*: He was then come away from his country, and kindred, and this was offered to him, as a proper motive to keep himself separate from them.

BUT since this Promise was not to be fulfilled, 'till he should become a great Nation, which was not likely to be in his time, and when the Promise was further explained to him, and he was particularly told it should not be fulfilled, 'till after the space of four hundred Years, one may naturally conclude from hence, there was something more meant, and which he understood to be meant by the Promise of this Land, than barely the Land itself:

FOR what great motive is it to any man, to leave his native country, and kindred, and live in an unsettled wandering life in great difficulties and dangers, in prospect only, that some of his Posterity should inherit such a Land four hundred years hence? And therefore 'tis very probable, I say, that something more was understood by this Land. What this was, we are not told, but it was probably explained to *Abraham*: And as he had been bred up in the Faith of the Saviour Promis'd, and liv'd in the Hope of all the advantages implied in that Promise, *viz.* the Pardon of Sin, the Resurrection of the Body, and Life Everlasting, as has before been shewn; so this Land might be given, as a Token, and a Pledge to assure him of these advantages he hoped for, not only to himself, but his Posterity, that would make themselves capable of them, by treading in the Steps of their Father *Abraham*. 'Tis very probable, I say, it might have been so understood, and explained to *Abraham*, though our History says nothing of it; and, if so, 'twas a powerful, and ingaging consideration to attempt any enterprize whatsoever.

Secondly, We have observed before, as a further Incouragement to *Abraham*, that he has the Promise, not only of a Numerous Issue, but that *in his seed all the Nations of the Earth should be Blessed*, and 'tis worth our notice here, how credible this story is in this respect.

FOR as the Promise of a Saviour was of the Highest Importance to Mankind, as necessarily containing under it an assurance of Pardon, Resurrection, and Eternal Life, so 'tis natural to conceive it would be look'd upon, as a particular Privilege

Privilege to any Family to have this Saviour descend from them: And upon *Burnett*. this account, as it was natural for all Mankind eagerly to desire Children, in hopes, that this expected Saviour might happen to be of their Posterity, so nothing could be offered to them at any time, as a motive and encouragement in any case so likely to work upon them, as to be assured of these things, that their hearts were so intirely set upon.

AND, therefore, when *Abraham* was first called from his Father's family to dwell in a strange land, which was a case so contrary to Human Nature, and so expos'd to difficulty, and danger, that it stood in need of the strongest motives, and supports, it is very agreeable to see how aptly he is assisted with such a consideration, as was in its own nature the most suitable, and most prevalent, that could be offered him.

Thirdly, WE have observed before a Revelation made to *Abraham*, concerning his Posterity to shew him how they should become a Nation, That *they should be first strangers in a land, that was not theirs, where they should serve, and be afflicted, and after the space of four hundred years, God would Judge the Land, and bring them out with great substance.* And the reason he gives for not doing it sooner, was, because *the Iniquities of the Amorites* would then, and not 'till then, be full.

THIS is the substance of the Prediction related in the Story, and 'tis very credible God might give such a Revelation to *Abraham*, since there was a necessity, in the nature of things, of some such Prediction one time or other.

FOR since God foresaw this People would, and in His wisdom intended they should, be afflicted, it was very necessary it should be known before-hand, and how long they should continue so.

FOR as they must naturally have been bred up in great expectations of God's favour to them, when they should afterwards find themselves in bondage, and feel the miseries of a sad Persecution, because they serv'd another God, and kept themselves a distinct people, they might then be naturally tempted to suspect the truth of those Promises, they had been so often told of, and instead of being God's favourite people, they might be apt to think themselves forsaken of him, and by this means might be inclined to throw off their Religion, and Separation, and become one people with their Persecutors.

BUT when they had been informed of these afflictions before-hand, and how long they should continue under them, and had not only been educated in the expectation of them, but every time they Circumcised a Child, they had this Prediction brought to their remembrance, together with the assurance of their deliverance, this was a most effectual means, not only to comfort them under their sorrows, but keep them in a Constant dependance upon God: Because this very affliction having been foretold by Him, was itself a proof of God's Promises to them; and though this was a very grievous burthen, yet it brought its own remedy along with it, in that it gave them assurance, that the whole Prediction should be fulfilled, and should one day end in their Happiness, in the enjoyment of the Land of *Canaan*, and whatever else was meant by it.

AND 'tis very natural to conceive this People were afterwards taught by *Abraham* to understand something more by it than the Land itself: For otherwise, what motive could it be to them to bear the sad afflictions they suffered upon the prospect of this country, if there was nothing more in it, but this, That after several hundred years, when they should be dead, and gone, and perhaps had been worn out by slavery, some of their Posterity, they knew not who, should go in great wealth into another Land, which they themselves should never be the better for: And therefore 'tis very probable, they were taught, that the Intention of this Promis'd Land, was chiefly to assure them of a state of Happiness; and if so, whenever they should be afterwards possess'd of that Land, it was the most engaging motive possible to a future resignation to God, and an entire dependance on Him; as it was likewise a strong confirmation of their Hopes of the Happiness intended by that Land, as they were sure of the Land itself.

Burnett.

THAT this was the notion they had of this Promise relating to that Land, and that this notion was probably handed down through all generations to the coming of Christ, they who believe the New Testament, will have very little reason to doubt: For 'tis to this that *Jesus Christ* seems plainly to refer in that Argument he urges against the *Sadducees*, (who believed only the Books of *Moses*) in proof of a Resurrection, and a future state, that God was *the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*. In which words he refers the *Sadducees* to that Covenant God made with *Abraham*, and his Seed, in which he engages to be their God (*Gen. xvii. 7, 8.*) By which expression the least that can be meant, must be not only that he would protect, and defend them, but would perform all His Promises to them.

Now in that Covenant that God had, at several times, made with *Abraham*, there were two things promised; *First*, There was a Confirmation of the coming of a Redeemer, in which Promise alone, as I before have proved, is necessarily implied the assurance of a Resurrection.

Secondly, THERE is the Promise of the Land of *Canaan*, which, if it had no other sense than a Temporal *Canaan*, could be of no benefit to those that should be dead, before the compleat enjoyment of it, as *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob* were. And therefore as that promis'd land must naturally relate to some future Happiness intended by it, so since that Happiness could not be enjoyed, but by living men, it supposes those alive to whom the Promise must belong: And therefore, when God engages to *Abraham* and his seed, that He will be their God, and perform all His Covenants with them, it naturally implies, that there should be a time when *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, and their seed, tho' dead, should one day be raised to life again, to possess the Happiness promis'd to them;

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THUS we see what use might be made, and how reasonable it was this people should before-hand be informed of what afflictions they were afterward to suffer.

WE may here further observe, that since they had the Promise of the Land of *Canaan*, it was likewise very suitable, that they should be sometime told how long they must expect the fulfilling of it.

For they might naturally indulge their hopes too far, and expect it sooner than was intended; and as by this means they would meet with many disappointments, so they might be tempted to lay aside their hopes; and since they were to suffer severe afflictions, this might likewise add to the temptation:

BUT, besides, they might doubt the Possibility of the thing, whilst they saw the Land inhabited by others; They might reason with themselves, how it could be done without dispossessing the present Inhabitants, and how they could be able to effect this, and how this could be done without Injustice; and whilst so many difficulties lay plainly in their way, 'twas not likely, that they would build with any assurance upon so doubtful a Promise, as this was, or keep themselves separate upon this account.

So that there seems a necessity, in the nature of the thing, of a proper Revelation in this case, to inform them of these things before-hand, and we must look upon this, as a very Credible Relation, that tells us of such a seasonable Prediction made, as accounts for all these doubts, and difficulties; In which the time of their coming out of *Aegypt* is defin'd, with the manner how the Land of *Canaan* should be theirs, *viz.* by God's dispossessing the Inhabitants, and the reason why he had decreed to do so, because they were obstinate and incorrigible sinners; and why he would not do it, 'till the fourth Generation, because then, and not 'till then, their Iniquities would be full.

AND when they were thus told of the Vengeance of God, upon the Iniquities of a wicked People, so that whenever they reflected on the Promis'd land, they must be put in mind of the consequence of sin; how wisely was this contrived to instruct them in their duty, and shew them by an Instance, they could not forget, that the only way to be intitled to God's favour, was to live in a due Obedience to Him?

Fourthly,

Fourthly, ANOTHER thing to be observed in this Story, is, That God is here *Burnett* set forth, as entering into Covenant with *Abraham*, for the performance of his Promises to him, and Circumcision is made the sign and seal of that Covenant.

By this method of God's treating with *Abraham*, we must not understand that God's Promises were not as firm, and inviolable without this, as with it; but, as a Formal Covenant is look'd upon by Men, as a more firm security, than a bare transient Promise; so God was pleas'd to treat with *Abraham* in a Human way, *being willing more abundantly to shew the Heirs of His Promise, the Immutability of His Counsel, that by two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lye, they might have strong consolation, and lay hold of the hope that was set before them, as a sure, and stedfast Anchor of their Soul, as the Apostle expresses it.*

THIS is a natural reason for God's dealing with mankind in this humble, and familiar way of Covenant, and since He was thus pleas'd to treat with *Abraham*, one cannot but admire the Wisdom of God in the Choice of Circumcision as the seal of it.

THIS was a very strange, and seemingly ridiculous Ceremony, and as it would hardly have ever been thought of by Man, so 'twas a thing, one may imagine, would never have been submitted to, but upon a thorough persuasion of its being appointed by God: And we may observe a great wisdom in this appointment, this Ceremony having a particular suitableness, in its very nature, to the End, God had to serve by that People.

FOR, since God had chosen them out of the world to be a separate People to Himself, and was pleas'd to enter into Covenant with them, as an assurance of His Promises of favour to them, what greater wisdom could there be than this, to appoint such a sign, and seal of His Covenant, as must necessarily keep them separate? And what could be contrived more effectual for this purpose, than this Ceremony of Circumcision, which was such a Mark in the Flesh, as no other people would voluntarily conform to them in, and no people can be supposed to have taken up, but by God's own appointment?

AND if it shall hereafter further appear, That as this Promis'd Land in this Covenant did represent to them a Future State of Happiness, so this sign of Circumcision, did likewise represent that Purity, and Holiness, which is required of every person that would make themselves capable of that Happiness, and as no uncircumcised person should enter into *Canaan*, so no one should enter into everlasting Happiness, but they who crucify the Flesh with the affections, and lusts, and cleanse themselves from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit. If, I say, this shall appear to be the meaning of it, then we see a still greater wisdom in the appointment of this otherwise odd Ceremony, as being not only an effectual means of distinguishing that People, who should be intitled to the temporal *Canaan*, but also, in a very lively manner, to set forth the duty of those, who would make themselves capable of the Spiritual *Canaan*.

Fourthly, ANOTHER thing we have before taken notice of, was the Revelation to *Abraham* concerning *Sodom*, and the Cities, that were to be destroy'd by Fire, and Brimstone.

WHAT the occasion of this might be, or what the particular reason, and design of it, the Story does not inform us. There might be important reasons for it, though we cannot discover them at this distance; 'tis enough for us in shewing the Credibility of the Story, if it agrees with the design of the whole, and if we can find out any good ends of Providence, it might serve at that time.

Now as we have shewn the necessity of great Encouragements to *Abraham*, and how God supplied him all along according to his occasions, so, tho' we do not see the absolute necessity of this, yet we see 'twas of great use to the same end, and as it was a vast Encouragement to *Abraham* to proceed in the way that he was then in, when he saw himself so highly favour'd of God, by such a strange and unusual Condescension, so this favour might be shewn him, as a kind of reward for his past obedience, and a token of God's approbation of it.

BUT

Burnett.

W B U T yet if we consider the circumstances of the Case, there might be something more in it, than this: We find by the Story, when *Abraham* was informed of the Intention of God to destroy those Cities, he was not fully satisfied of the Justice of it: He thought there must be some Righteous people there, and he could not understand the Justice of that Punishment, that should slay the Righteous with the Wicked.

B U T in the way that this matter is set before us, he is not only instructed in the Justice of the Punishment, but the Severity of that Justice is at the same time softened by a Beautiful Idea of His Mercy, and that too represented in such a manner, as to give him a most ingaging motive to Obedience, when he saw the Righteous so favoured by God, that sometimes even the Wicked should be preserved for their sakes.

A N D if we further consider the Circumstances of this Story, where God is represented, as reasoning with Himself, Why *He should hide His Intentions from His Servant Abraham*, when He knew the Integrity of his heart, *That He would command his Children, and his Household after him, to keep the way of the Lord*; this is not only a lively way of Instruction to *Abraham*, and a great Encouragement to his Obedience, That God is so dispos'd to manifest Himself to an Honest, and Sincere Heart, and, That they who will know the Will of God, must be first resolved to do His Will, but here is also a plain Intimation given us, That as *Abraham* was to Instruct his Children, and his Household, he had this favour shewn him on that account, that not only he himself might have a right notion of the Justice, and Mercy of God, but that they also might be rightly informed of them by Him; a right apprehension of these attributes being of very important concern to those, *who would keep the way of the Lord*.

T H U S we see how this History answers thus far; How *Abraham* was provided with proper encouragements, and assisted with such suitable motives, as Reason might expect to find in a credible account of him.

A N D if this be therefore a probable History thus far, here we have new matter for new Revelation, which we may likewise hereafter expect to find in the sequel of his Story.

F O R here we are told, that *in Abraham's Seed all the Families of the Earth should be Blessed*, by which words the least that could be intended, was, that the Promis'd Saviour should descend from him, and that his Seed should be the means of conveying all those Blessings to the world, which I have shewn to be originally implied in that Promise:

A N D as *Abraham* is said, in this History, to have had two sons, *Ishmael*, and *Isaac*, to the latter of which this Great Privilege is appropriated, so that, from him the seed of *Abraham* was to be reckon'd, so there was a necessity, in the nature of things, of some means to be prescribed some time or other, for the keeping up of a distinction in their families, that since this Saviour was not to be look'd for presently, there might be no room to doubt, when He should come, that He was of the Seed of *Abraham*, of *Isaac's* Branch, and that every one might be capable of satisfying himself of this: There seems to be a necessity, I say, of something of this kind; but whether there was afterwards any Revelation made for this purpose, shall be considered in another place; and if we hereafter find it so, as it will be a great instance of the Consistency of this Story, so will it be no less an argument of the Credibility of it.

A N D thus I have done with the second thing required in a credible History of *Abraham*.

C H A P. V.

The third thing required in a History of Abraham.

T H I R D L Y, The next thing that we have shewn may reasonably be expected in a History of *Abraham*, is, To be told How he became a Nation;

tion; and this we have set before us in a very rational and affecting manner in this *Burnett*. History, 'Tis not, as I observed, very easy to conceive how the seed of one man could become a nation, distinct from all others, whilst the world was already inhabited; How they could be kept together, and grow up into a separate Body, without intermixing with, or depending on any other people, unless they could have been settled in some waste Island, or Country, where no other people should come, but themselves; but as such a settlement would have been inconsistent with the end of their separation, and 'twas necessary for the benefit of the world that they should be seen, and known, and, in some distant manner, converse with other people; so 'tis very agreeable to observe in this History how easily and rationally this is brought about, by their going into *Egypt*, and that too in a manner so natural as is here represented,

ONE cannot but admire the Wisdom of Providence, and in that the Credibility of this History, that since they were to become a Distinct Nation, and must have necessarily some place to live together, that *Egypt* should be the place provided for them; a Place, above all others, particularly fitted for the keeping them a separate People, the *Hebrews* being such an Abomination to the *Egyptians*, that they would not so much as eat with them, and therefore were not likely to mix with them.

AND therefore, when we read of the *Israelites* being brought into this Country, and *Joseph* their Brother, by a strange Providence, sent thither before them, as it were, as a Harbinger, to procure an Interest for their settlement, and that the place provided for them was the Land of *Goshen*, a place where they were to live by themselves, what can one think of this whole transaction, but as a thing not only highly rational in it self, but a particular contrivance of the Wisdom of God, that since he intended they should be a separate People, he brought them hither, and planted them here, as in a Nursery, where they might multiply, and grow, and gather Strength, 'till they should be fit to be removed, and transplanted into the promised land?

THIS was the visible design of Providence, in bringing them hither: How it fared with them here, we are particularly told; and as my design is to shew the Credibility of the Story, I will examine the several parts of it, and shew the Wisdom of God in every Instance.

C H A P. XI.

The Credibility of the History of the Children of Israel, and of their Afflictions.

THE first thing to be observed in this Story, is, That the Children of *Israel* were miserably afflicted; That they should be so, had been foretold to *Abraham*, and as this Story gives a very natural reason why they were so; so 'twas a great Instance of God's Wisdom, that they should be so: For whatever other wise ends God had to serve by that affliction, we may observe a particular suitableness in it to His End, in keeping them a separate people, and the design of removing them to another land.

FOR as the reason of keeping them a separate people, was the Preservation of the True Religion, so this affliction might naturally contribute towards this.

FOR as the *Egyptians* were a Nation over-run with Idolatry, had the *Israelites* been kindly treated there, this might have gain'd upon their affections, and by contracting friendships, and familiarities with the *Egyptians*, they might have been drawn away into their superstitions: But when they found themselves hated by the *Egyptians*, and suffer'd such sad hardships from them, this naturally begat an Aversion towards them, and made them less liable to be corrupted by them. Even as it was, we find by the Story, that the *Israelites* could not keep themselves free from Infection, but they got a tincture of the *Egyptian* Idolatry; but without this they must have probably been over-run with it, and would have entirely fallen away.

BESIDES, this affliction was very suitable to the Promise of their coming to the

Burnett. Land of *Canaan*, as it might be a natural and necessary means to prepare their minds for their removal thither.

FOR when *Egypt* was become their Native Country, they doubtless had a natural fondness for it, and as they, and their Families were settled there, they could have no Inclination to remove from thence. 'Twas the last thing they would probably have desired, or thought of, and, without a Miracle, it would have been impossible to bring them to it, so long as they could hope to live in any tolerable ease and comfort there.

BUT when they were so miserably harra's'd by the *Egyptians*, and put under such a barbarous, and unnatural persecution, as that of destroying their own Children, together with other miserable oppressions, this alone would be sufficient to make them weary of the place, and glad of an opportunity of removing thence.

So that nothing could be more fitted to the design of Providence, in relation to this people, than this circumstance of their Affliction : But this was only to prepare them for their removal.

THE next thing to be observ'd, is, How they came out, and this, the Story says, was by the Execution of Great, and Strange Judgments on the *Egyptians*.

THIS event had likewise been foretold to *Abraham*, and 'tis no ways unlikely, that a Cruel and Idolatrous people might be ripe for such Judgments on their own account ; but it gives a great Credibility to the Story, when we can discern a particular wisdom, in suiting those Judgments to the circumstances of God's chosen people, and the End they were chosen for.

FOR when we consider, that this chosen people, by living long under the Government of *Egypt*, had got the Infection of their Idolatry, 'twas absolutely necessary it should be cured : For they were set apart, as I said before, on purpose to preserve the True Religion, and by consequence it was necessary, that they should be inform'd of the Only True God, and how to worship Him, as God ; and what could be more effectual to convince their Reason, that the God of *Israel* was this God, than such works as none but He could do, even by the confession of the Magicians themselves ?

AND accordingly we read in *Exodus*, ch. vi. v. 6. that God requires *Moses* to inform the *Israelites*, That He was the Lord, the God of *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, and as a proof of this, he was to tell them, that He would bring them out of bondage, with a stretch'd-out arm, and with great Judgments, and by this they should know, that He was the Lord their God.

AGAIN we may consider, this People was bred up in mighty notions of their Privileges, as the seed of *Abraham* the friend of God, and by consequence the favourites of Heaven, and when they found themselves persecuted upon this account, they might naturally expect that God would appear in their behalf, and make some distinction in their favour, and what could more effectually demonstrate this, than to see such Judgments on the Land of *Egypt*, whilst themselves were entirely free ?

AND when we further consider, as it appears by this Story, that *Moses* was the Person appointed by God to bring this people out of *Egypt*, a Person altogether unqualified for such a work without the assistance of an Almighty Power, here is a particular aptness in these Judgments for this end, not only in convincing the *Israelites* themselves, that He was sent by God upon this Errand, and was able to effect what he propos'd, that they might be willing to come away with him ; but also to work upon the obstinate *Egyptians*, and oblige them to let the People go. And accordingly, these were the Ends those Judgments upon the *Egyptians*, and that Miraculous Power, which *Moses* was indued withal, were intended for, as we read *Exod.* iv.—*Chap.* vi. ver. 6, 7, 8.

AND if we add to this, on the other hand, that these *Egyptians* might be not only ripe for Vengeance, as I said before, upon the account of their Cruelties, and other wickednesses, but wanted also to be inform'd of the True God, What could be more suitable, and proper for this end, than these Judgments, which might serve at once both for Punishment and Conviction, and that too not only of the True God, but also of their guilt in having offended Him, and, by consequence, of their duty, and interest to worship Him, and live in all Obedience to Him ? And accordingly we likewise read, that this was one Intention of the Divine Judgments on that people, viz. that *Pharaoh*, and by consequence his Subjects, should understand,

stand, that He the God of the Hebrews was The Lord, *Exod. vii. 17.* and that there Burnett. was none like Him in all the Earth, *ch. viii. 22.* — *ix. 14.* and that the Earth is the Lord's, *ch. vii. 3, 4, 5.* that is, that He is the only True God, the Creator and Governor of the World.

AND as they were apparently intended for the Punishment of that Nation, it is very probable, that every Judgment upon Egypt might have had some relation to some particular Sin of that People, either against God, or against the *Israelites*, so as to carry in its nature some resemblance to that Sin it was intended as a punishment for: The Author of the *Book of Wisdom* has in several instances endeavour'd to shew this, *Ch. xi. 15. Ch. xv. 18, 19. Ch. xvi. 1. Ch. xvii. 2, 3. Ch. xviii. 5.* But tho' the observations may not be so just in all respects, yet as to the last great Plague in the Death of every First-born of the *Egyptians*, this carries so lively a resemblance, and has so natural a relation to their Sin, in destroying every Male Child of the *Israelites*, that one can hardly think at first Sight, but it must have been purposely so order'd by a Wise Providence, not only, as a Punishment for their Sins in general, but particularly to teach them, by their own Experience, what an unnatural Cruelty they had us'd to the *Israelites*, and how justly they suffer'd for it.

AND when we consider all this together, what greater token can we have of the Credibility of this Story, than to observe such a wonderful Wisdom in it, and to see it so contriv'd, as to answer so many great, and good Ends at once, which were not only worthy of the Divine Cognizance in themselves, but seem'd in their very nature to require some provision to be made for them; And to see it done in such a manner, as if each of these ends had been the particular and only care of Providence in this dispensation?

THE next thing observable in this Story is, The Success of these Judgments in procuring the dismissal of this People, and their coming away with *Jewels of Gold, and Silver, and Raiment.*

THIS is a Circumstance, that had likewise been foretold to *Abraham*, that they should come away with great Substance; And this is a very credible relation, not only for the reason, that is here given of it, *viz.* That the *Egyptians* were afraid of being destroy'd upon their account, and so were glad to get rid of them at any rate, in that terrible fright they were then under, but also as it is said to be so order'd by God, (*Exod. xi. 2.*) For, considering what this people had suffer'd by the *Egyptians*, here is a natural Suitableness, and Equity in this Appointment, and it may be considered, not only as a kind of Recompence for their sufferings in general, but as a particular satisfaction, for what they had by Right due to them for their labours. For 'tis very probable that as they had been oppress'd with labour, so they might have been likewise in their wages, and being us'd as slaves, 'tis very reasonable to think they might have been paid like slaves, just as their Arbitrary Masters pleas'd: Nay, we are particularly told, that they were forced to make the same tale of Brick, though they gathered the Straw, as they us'd to do before, when 'twas provided for them; And if their Wages before, as 'tis natural to suppose, were not greater, than their work deserv'd, this addition to their labour in gathering the Straw, was working so much time for nothing.

AND therefore, when they had power to Right themselves, they demanded of the *Egyptians Jewels of gold, and silver, and raiment.* For the word which we ill translate *Borrowed*; signifies *Demanded*; and this, I say, they did probably, as a Right, though the *Egyptians* would call it only a Loan.

AND 'tis very observable, that God is not only said to have given them orders to make this demand, but also to have given them favour in the Sight of the *Egyptians* to let them have such things as they required (*Exod. xii. 36.*) that it might appear to be his work, thereby to let them know, that He was as Just to them in recompencing their sufferings and losses, as He was to the *Egyptians*, in avenging their Oppressions, on whom this might be likewise inflicted, as a further Punishment.

So that in this view, this Instance which at first seems an Act of Injustice in the *Israelites*, was, in reality, the very contrary: And as it was done by the appointment of God Himself, they were only His Instruments to take from that People, what they held only by the bounty of His Providence, and had now forfeited by their transgressions.

THE next thing observable in the Story of this people, is their going thro' the Wilderness,

Burnett. Wilderness, and their continuing there forty Years. The reason here given for taking that Way, is very wise, and rational: *viz.* That if they had gone through the land of the *Philistines*, which was near, and lay in their way to *Canaan*, this would naturally have begat War, and as War would have affrighted, and discourag'd them in their Enterprize, so they would have repented and gone back to *Egypt*, *Exod. xiii. 17.*

BUT there was another wise reason in the nature of the thing; For, as I have often observed, this People were chosen for the preservation of the True Religion in opposition to Idolatry, and yet they were so addicted to Idolatry themselves, that where-ever they had any opportunity, they joined themselves to the Heathen worship, and notwithstanding all the testimonies God had given of Himself, that He was the only True God, by the signs and wonders they had seen him do, yet they still fell off upon every occasion: So that had they gone immediately into the Land of *Canaan*, which was then a Land of Idolaters, they would no doubt have worshipp'd their gods, and learnt their manners, and so defeated the design of Providence.

AND therefore in Wisdom God led them through the Wilderness, that they might converse with no other people, lest they might be further corrupted by them: And as this was a place where they could not subsist, and be provided with necessaries in a Natural way, but must eat, and drink by Miracle, so it was by consequence a proper place to train them up into a sense of his Authority, and convince them, that He was the only true God, by the daily fresh Instances of His Power, and Goodness, which they could not possibly but take notice of: And for this reason he kept them in the Wilderness so long, 'till the old Generation was all gone off, and a new one sprung up in their room, that had not been leaven'd with Idolatry, that had seen no other people, nor country, and knew no other God, but Him, whose wonders they had been eye-witnesses of, and whose miracles they had lived by, and whom they had learnt to fear, and reverence.

AND when God had thus raised Himself a people, prepared, and fitted for His purpose, that might be proper Inhabitants for the Land of Promise, He then gave them actual possession of it, and led them directly into *Canaan*.

THUS we see how this People become a Nation, and how every Circumstance that happened to them had a particular relation to their being so; we see what a natural agreement there is in every thing, either to the Circumstances of that People themselves, or to the design of God in making them a People, and, we cannot, after this, with any reason, suspect the Credibility of this relation thus far.

C H A P. XII.

The fourth thing required in a History of Abraham, and his Family relating to their Laws and Government.

THE next thing to be inquired after in the History of this People, is, some account of their Laws, and Government, and this we find in our History in a very extraordinary manner.

SOON after this People came into the Wilderness, and were not only separated from all other Nations, but absolutely independent of them, the first care of Providence is imployed in settling them under some rules of Order, and forming them into a Regular Commonwealth, and for this purpose, He gives them a system of Laws to govern themselves by in their Moral, Religious, and Civil Capacity; And as they were made a Nation by God, and could not be preserved so, but by His Almighty Power, so, we are told, they receiv'd their Laws from God, and were immediately Governed, and Protected by Him. And though God gave them all sufficient Evidence, that those Laws they received were given by Him, by the wonders He shew'd at the giving of them, and afterwards when they were under His immediate Protection, by the frequent Miracles he wrought in their behalf, yet it is worth our while in this place, a little to reflect, how He manifested His wisdom in the Laws themselves, in adapting them to the circumstances, and disposition of that People, and the End they were chosen for.

The Wisdom of God shewn in the Jewish Law.

Burnett.

As, *First*, 'T is evident, by the account we have of them, that they were, as 'tis very natural to conceive they might be, a very dull, and stupid people, having been bred up in hard labour, under the oppressions of Tyranny, and Arbitrary Power, which is apt to break, and debase mens spirits; and considering this, how graciously does their Great, and Wise Lawgiver condescend to their weak capacities, fitting the Number of His Moral precepts to their memories, by reducing them to Ten short commands, and representing the most important truths to them, under such Emblems, and Figures, as they had been accustomed to, that he might not only the more easily Instruct them in those things represented by those Figures, but also the more deeply imprint them on their minds:

WHAT I mean by these Emblems and Figures, shall be shewn by and by, (p. 542.)

Secondly, IF we consider them as they were, a people prone to, and already corrupted with Idolatry, here was a wise Provision in this case also, and that not only in the vast multitude of Observances impos'd upon them to keep them continually busy, and imploy'd, that they might not be at leisure to imitate their Heathen Neighbours, but also in the appointment of such particular Ceremonies as were directly contrary to their Idolatrous Rites.

THE Ceremonies, for Instance of the Passover, the manner of building the Altar, and of going up to it; the Prohibitions of seething a Kid in its mother's milk, of offering Honey in Sacrifices, of forcing their Children to pass through the Fire to *Moloch*, of eating Blood, and rounding the corners of their heads, and cutting their Flesh, were all so many commands injoin'd by God, only in opposition to such customs in the Heathen Idolatry (as has been proved by *Maimonides*, and Dr. *Spencer*): And as for those others, which we cannot see the reason of, 'tis probable they might likewise have been appointed with the same view, though it cannot so evidently be made appear at this distance, since the Rites of those antient Idolaters have been long since abolish'd, and are but imperfectly recorded in some few antient Authors, as the learned Dr. *Allix* well observes in his *Reflections on the Old, and New Testament*.

Thirdly, IF we consider them as a people separated from other Nations, here likewise we may observe a Wise Provision made to keep them so, not only by continuing the Ordinance of Circumcision, but also by forbidding them to conform to the Rites and Customs of other people, and injoining such a distinction of Meats, and Sacrifices, as must necessarily keep them from all other people. For they were to Abstain from what others Ate, and to Eat and Sacrifice what the others Worship'd; and as this gave the Heathen an abhorrence of them, so when they could neither eat nor worship together, it naturally prevented all Intimacy of converse with them.

THIS was the reason given for that command of Clean and Unclean Creatures in *Leviticus* even by God Himself: And 'tis very probable for the same reason, that the Law condescends to such little things, as the fashion of their Dress, their Beards, their Phylacteries, and the Rails before their Houses, and the like, that He might in every respect distinguish, and make them known from other people, and so prevent all mixture and confusion with them. *Levit. xx. 24, 25.*

Lastly, IF we consider, that the end of their separation was, that they might be a holy, and peculiar people to the Lord, *Lev. xx. 26. Exod. xix. 6.*

'T is obvious to every Eye, that this was the Great End of the whole Law, and 'tis worth our Observation how every part of it is wisely fitted for this End.

I NEED not observe this in the Moral Law, which relates to our duty to God, and Man; Every one sees the Natural Obligation of this; How it tends in its own nature to make us like God, and Happy in the Injoyment of Him: The same design is likewise visible, and there is a particular fitness for that design, even in the Judicial, and Ceremonial part of it.

As for the Judicial precepts, which relate only to the Government of the Civil State, 'tis evident, they are all along calculated for the Incouragement of Virtue, and the Prevention of Vice, and Irregularity. And tho' the many Ceremonies relating to their Religion, seem only to be so many Arbitrary Forms, and mere outside Rites, yet they were likewise injoin'd with a Moral Intention: And tho' they might be pro-

Burnett. per for the low estate of that people, merely as outside Forms of Pomp, to affect their minds with a greater Awe, and Reverence in their Worship, yet they have been Antiently understood to have many other views, and among others 'tis very probable they might have been appointed to instruct these ignorant, and stupid People in Moral duties, by such visible signs, and representations, as they had been accustomed to, and was a common way of Instruction in the Country they had liv'd in.

THUS, for Instance, their Sacrifices of Expiation might be intended to put them in mind of the sad consequence, and desert of sin, and the Obligation they had to die to sin, if they would be reconcil'd to God; their Eucharistical Sacrifices were naturally proper to keep up a sense of their dependance upon God, and of their owing all they had, to His Favour and Bounty, and by consequence of the strong Engagements they were under to all returns of Duty, and Gratitude. Their Circumcision was not only a sign of their Covenant with God, but also of the necessity of parting with their Lusts, if they would be intitled to the Benefits of it: Their Legal Washings, and Purifications shew'd them, how pure a God they served, and how clean every person ought to be from all filthiness of Flesh, and Spirit, that would either come into His presence, or hope for His favour. And the Prohibition of certain meats might likewise be intended to teach them to avoid those sins, and dispositions, that had a resemblance to those creatures they were ordered to abstain from. When Swines Flesh, for Instance, was made Unclean, to them, it might be for Instruction in Righteousness, as well as other Ends, that they might by this be taught to avoid the brutal Nature of that Creature, that as he wallows in the Mire, when full, so they should not wallow in sin, which is usually represented under the notion of Filth, nor abuse their Plenty to Sensuality, and Licentiousness.

WHEN they are forbid to eat Birds of Prey, 'tis to teach them, that they must not live by Rapine; And by Fish without Scales, that delight in Mud, they were taught to avoid all Earthly-mindedness, and all base and mean designs, and practices.

THESE Interpretations may be look'd upon, only as the result of a luxuriant Imagination: And tho' I must confess a Fanciful Invention may go far in this way, yet that this was the natural construction of these Laws, we have very great reason to think: I have already taken notice, that this was the way of speaking in those days, and in those Countries, and we use it still in our own language, and are very well understood, when we do so. When we would speak of a Man's Ingratitude, or Sensuality, or Rage or Lust, or Subtlety, we speak of him, under the Notion of a Hog, a Lyon, a Goat, and a Fox, and if we should bid a man abstain from these, and have a care of making them part of himself, he would be understood without an Interpreter.

THE Moral of such Similitudes, is obvious enough, and that this was one Intention of these Legal Ceremonies, has been the current sense of Antient times; And thus much is very certain, even from the Scriptures themselves, that they were all to be esteemed as vain and fruitless, and the Observance of them, as unacceptable to God, unless they were accompanied with the Fruits of Righteousness, which looks, as if this were the Intention of them. See *Isa.* lxvi. 3.—i. 13.—lviii. 45, &c. *Prov.* xv. 8.—xxviii. 9. *Zach.* vii. 5. *Psal.* li. 16, 17.—xl. 8, 9. *Jer.* vii. 3, 4, 5, &c.—xxi. 22, 23, &c. *Hosea* vi. 6. *Micah* vi. 6, 7, 8.

AND as this was the Great Design of the whole Law, so it was not wanting, in proper motives, to enforce the Observation of it:

THEY were a people bred up in the Hopes of a Saviour to come, and in the Promise of that Saviour, I have already shewn, was implied, the Promise of Everlasting Happiness; He could not be a Saviour without it. The same thing, I have likewise shewn, was understood by the Promise of the Land of *Canaan*, viz. a future State of Rest, and Comfort, of which that Land was a Token, and a Pledge. This, I say, I have observ'd, they probably understood in this Sense, and the New Testament confirms it to us, if that shall hereafter appear of any Credit: So that when they were in actual possession of this Land, they had thereby an assurance in hand, of the future Enjoyment of what they hop'd for, provided they were but faithful in their Covenant.

THIS was some part of the Encouragement they had, but this was not sufficient in their case; their Circumstances requir'd more.

As they were to continue separate from others for the preservation of the True Religion, they stood in need of temporal Promises, that they might have no temptation for temporal gain, to fall away into the Gentile Superstitions. For, since the Heathens imputed all their worldly Successes to the Worship of their Idols, and false Gods, there was a necessity, in proportion, that the God of *Israel* should shew himself as Gracious to his Votaries, as the False Gods were suppos'd to be to Theirs; and therefore 'tis so far from being a derogation to this Law, that it abounds so much with the Promises of Temporal Blessings, that it is a particular Instance of the Wisdom of it; such Promises being not only most likely to work upon that stupid low-minded people, but suited also to their particular circumstances, and occasions, as they were to be kept separate from other nations.

THUS we see the Wisdom of the *Jewish* Laws, and thereby the Credibility of this History of *Moses*, so far as it relates to them.

C H A P. XIII.

What may be naturally expected in a History of Abraham, and his Family, relating to the Preservation, and Propagation of the True Religion.

THE next thing to be inquir'd into, and which we may reasonably expect to find in a History of this People, is, That, since one Great End God had to serve by them, was, the Preservation of the True Religion in opposition to Idolatry, they were thoroughly instructed in the True Religion themselves, and that this was also kept pure, and undefiled amongst them.

Secondly, THAT some means were made use of from time to time to bring their Religion to the Knowledge of other nations.

As to the first of these, that we may represent this matter in its proper light, we must inquire what is to be meant by True Religion:

Now, by this we must understand two things: First, A Right Knowledge of the True God, and How we are to behave ourselves to Him, considering the Relation He bears to us. Secondly, A True Faith, and Confidence in the Promis'd Saviour. The first was the Sum of Natural, the second of Reveal'd Religion: And as it was Revealed, as a Remedy for Sin, so 'twas the only Comfort that Sinners had, and a very great Comfort it was, as containing in it, as I have before observed, the Assurance of Pardon and Reconciliation with God, as also a Deliverance from Death into a State of Everlasting Life and Happiness: Now, as a sinful World could have but little encouragement to Obedience, without some assurance of this kind, and we know no such assurance they had, but what was implied in this Promise: so a Due Faith, and Confidence in the performance of this Promise, was a Fundamental Article of the Religion of Sinners. So that when I speak of the necessity of their being instructed in the True Religion, I mean, That they should be thoroughly taught to know the True God, Who He is, and What He is, and how to worship, and serve him acceptably. Secondly, To Believe in the Saviour to come, thro' whom God had promis'd Eternal Happiness to all that would obey Him faithfully.

THIS is True Religion, and as this is what we may expect to find in a History of this people set apart by God for this purpose; so 'tis very obvious to observe how this is effectually provided for.

WHILST this people dwelt amongst the *Egyptians*, 'tis evident their notions of God had been corrupted, and they were infected with the Idolatry of the Country; and therefore we have already taken notice, that one great End of those many Judgments upon *Egypt*, was to shew them, that the gods of the *Egyptians* were no gods, but that He that did those works was the True God.

AND afterwards when they came into the Wilderness, when God gave them their Laws, in that amazing manner we are told of, He in the first place lets them know, That there was but One God; and that He, who spake to them was that One God; And for a proof of this, He appeals to His Works: And as the reason of His speak-

Burnett. ing in that Formidable manner, was, as we are told, that *they might know, that he was the Lord and none else*, Deut. iv. 35. vi. 7; so, as a further Proof of it, I say, He refers them to His Works in bringing them out of the Land of Egypt, and out of the House of Bondage. *I am the Lord thy God*, says he, *that brought thee out of the Land of Egypt, out of the House of Bondage*: In which words He appeals to his bringing them out of the Land of Egypt, which he did by such mighty Signs, and Wonders, as shew'd that He was *The Lord*, that Great Governour of the world, and which He did for that very purpose, as we read in *Exod.* iv. 5.—vii. 17.—viii. 10, 22.—ix. 14, 16, 17.—x. 2. And he refers them to His bringing them out of the house of Bondage, to shew them that He was *the Lord, their God, the God of Abraham*, who as he had promis'd to *Abraham*, that, tho' *his Seed should be Strangers in a land, that was not theirs, where they should serve, and be afflicted*, that is, be in Bondage, till 400 Years, yet in the fourth Generation He would bring them out with great Substance, so accordingly he had now done. See *Exod.* vii. 7, 8. And by this performance of His promise in their deliverance from this bondage, He shewed undeniably, that he was that God, *who spake to Abraham, His God, and Theirs*, that is, the God they had all along profess'd to believe in, and had been protected by.

THIS is the plain meaning of the words, tho' otherwise understood by most Commentators: And in this Sense of them, all the world are as much concern'd to Believe in, and Serve the God that brought the children of Israel out of Egypt, and out of the House of Bondage, as they themselves were; Because the consideration of this deliverance is not offer'd, as a motive to Obedience only, in which that people only were concern'd, but as a proof of His being the God of *Israel*, and the only True God:

AND when we Christians are requir'd to Believe in, and Serve the same God under the same Character, and on the same Consideration of being the Deliverer of the Children of *Israel*, 'tis to be meant, that we must receive only The God of *Israel* for our God, who gave that undeniable proof of His being the True God. [But this by the bye.]

THUS we see what provision was made for the Knowledge of the one True God among this people.

AND as they are requir'd to have no other Gods but Him, so they are likewise taught how to serve him acceptably, paying their Adorations to Him alone, and not any Creature in Heaven, or in Earth, as if He were residing in them; nor forming to themselves any likeness of Him, as if He were to be resembled by any of them.

Deut. vi.
13, 14.

THAT they should live in such a Holy Awe of Him, as to swear by His Name alone, and not to use it without the utmost Reverence, that is, not trifling with it in their communication, much less presuming to appeal to Him by Oath, unless it be in a matter of great Importance, and that too in Truth, and Righteousness, and Judgment.

AND to preserve this Holy Awe of Him in their minds, as He had given them sufficient Instances of His being the Great Governour of the world, by his bringing them out of the Land of Egypt; so He particularly provided, that they should not forget, that He was the Creator of it too, and therefore oblig'd them to continue the separation of one day in seven to His Honour, applying themselves therein to such Holy Offices, as He Himself appointed for that purpose.

THIS was the standing Rule of their Religion towards God, and as they had, as has been already shewn, a full account of their duty to one another, so they wanted no motives to enforce the Observation of it.

So that they could not stand in need of any further Information, in respect either of their duty to God, or Man.

THIS was all done upon their first coming into the Wilderness; and afterward that they might not only be kept in a continual sense of all this, but also, that their Children, which should be born, might not want a due Evidence of the same Almighty Power, which these their Fathers had seen in Egypt, to convince them of the one True God, and of their obligation to serve, and obey Him, God was pleased to keep this whole people for forty Years together in the Wilderness, in a constant dependance upon his Miraculous Power for their necessary support of life, and let them see many remarkable, and distinguishing Judgments upon those, who would not submit to His Authority.

AND farther still, when He afterwards led them into the Land of *Canaan*, He *Burnett.* did it in such a manner, as to let them see, That He was *The Lord*, and that this was His Work, and that those, whom the Heathen worshipp'd for Gods, *were no Gods, but the work of mens hands*, that not one of them could stand before Him, or was able to do as He had done.

AND to keep up the remembrance of all this, as He had before injoin'd the Observation of the Sabbath, so He now likewise appoints three several Festivals to be observ'd every year thro' all their generations: The Passover, in memory of their deliverance from the destroying Angel in *Egypt*; The Feast of Pentecost, or Weeks, in memory of their receiving the Law, with all its astonishing Circumstances; The Feast of Tabernacles, in remembrance of their dwelling in Tents, and all the several wonders of their passage thro' the Wilderness, till they came into the Land of *Canaan*.

AND that they might not want living Witnesses of these things, which they were thus appointed to commemorate, we may here observe the Wisdom of Providence, and therein the Credibility of this History, when we are told, not only, that some *Egyptians* were permitted to come along with them out of *Egypt*, but afterward, when they enter'd into the Land of *Canaan*, the *Gibeonites* were preserved amongst them; who, as they might be a living testimony to those, that should be born in their Days, of what had happen'd in that Country, as to the manner how the Children of *Israel* got possession of it; so they must be a standing memorial to all future generations of the Truth, and Certainty of the thing, when they should see some parts of its Antient Inhabitants still remaining among them in Servility.

BUT still, to make all these the more effectual, Providence took care that the History of all these past transactions, should be put into their hands in writing, that they might have a standing record of them; and not only requir'd that every Family should read it continually at home, and inform one another of the contents of it night and day, but that it should be read every Sabbath-day in Publick: And every seventh year it was done in a more solemn manner before the whole congregation of that people, who, during that year, being oblig'd to rest from all their ordinary labours, and employments, had nothing else to do but read, and meditate upon it.

AND as God took care they should have leisure; so it was their concern to lay hold of every opportunity that offer'd itself, for the Improvement of their Knowledge in this Book.

FOR, as its precepts related to all the Accidents of life, so that no action could happen, either publick, or private, which it had not some rule or direction for; so the Law made it Death to act contrary to them, out of a principle of Obstinacy, and Presumption; nay, even those transgressions, that were committed out of Ignorance, could not be forgiven without certain Sacrifices, the forms of which were scrupulously prescrib'd, and not to be dispens'd with on any consideration. So that here was a necessity of their being thoroughly vers'd in this Book, and of having a continual recourse to it, when every action of their lives was to be regulated by it, even in many of the smallest circumstances, and especially when every transgression, how involuntary soever, was so strictly to be accounted for.

AND when we consider all these together, what better method could there be, more likely to establish the True Religion in their minds, than this was? And that they might be kept Pure, and Undeiled in the True Religion, in respect both of their Knowledge, and Practice, we read, they were not only forbidden, when they should come to *Canaan*, so much as to inquire how those nations serv'd their gods, but they are threaten'd, by *Moses*, with dismal Judgments, whenever they should conform to them, either in their idolatrous, or other wicked practices.

THE Historical Books of Scripture, that follow, which were wrote after *Moses's* time, give us many, and strange Instances of the fulfilling these threatnings. But notwithstanding all, we are told, they frequently fell off both from their God, and their Duty: Whatever good resolutions they were brought to at times, they soon forgot them all again, and stood in need of Discipline as much as ever: And as their Circumstances then called for new dispensations, so God was not wanting to them in such means as might be proper to work upon them, and accordingly sent His Prophets to declare His Will to them: This begat all those Prophetick writings, which are handed down to us in the Scripture, which are nothing else, but the several

Burnett. messages sent to them from God, either to reform their notions, or correct their manners, in bringing them off from Immorality or Idolatry, according as their occasions called for them.

WHAT the immediate occasion of every particular Prophecy, was, we are not indeed told expressly; But as the Children of *Israel* were a people extremely prone to Idolatry, God had regard to this in all His dispensations towards them, to convince them, that *He was the Lord their God*; And therefore, when He had decreed to punish them for their Sins, He gave them notice of it by His Prophets, as He did, on the other hand, of their deliverance from afflictions, or any other Mercy He intended for them, that they might be sensible it was His Work.

SOMETHING of this nature, relating either to Favour, or Punishment, is the Subject of every Prophecy, and this might be proper at all times, for such an unconstant back-sliding people to keep up a Sense of the true God amongst them:

BUT it was more particularly necessary in case of Punishment, and especially when the Punishment intended was Captivity: When this was the case, as we read it frequently was for their Idolatry, there was always a more particular necessity of a seasonable Prediction of it.

FOR, had they been given up into their Enemies hands, without being first told the reason of it, considering how highly they valued themselves upon the privilege of their being the people of God, and what Stress they laid upon the antient Covenant, of the Inheritance of the Land of *Canaan*, as if their whole hopes had depended on it, they might have suspected, that they had been forsaken, and subdued by the Power of the gods of their Enemies: That their own God was not able to protect them, and secure the promise of *Canaan* to them, and so might have been tempted to fall away.

THIS was the Heathen's way of reasoning (*2 Kings* xviii. 23.) they imputed their Successes against their Enemies to the Superior Power of the gods they worshipp'd: And as this was an argument that they would doubtless press upon this people, to draw them off from the God they serv'd; so it would be too likely to prevail upon them.

AND therefore, to prevent this, God all along forewarned them of their punishment, and foretold the particular reason, and design of it, *viz.* That it was not only for their sins in general, but in particular for their Idolatry: By which He let them plainly understand, that the Affliction He intended to lay upon them, was His Work, and His alone: And that He might thoroughly convince them of it, He always adds, That whenever they should repent, and forsake their sins, which had been the occasion of their sufferings, they should see a further proof of His Mighty Power in the removal of their punishment from them.

AND as 'tis very remarkable to find in this History, how punctually the Events always answered the Predictions, that is, how the Vengeance threatned, and the Mercy promis'd, never fail'd to come to pass, according as they had been foretold;

So what can we imagine more effectual in the nature of things to affect their minds with a sense of their Duty, and their Sins, and preserve them in the True Religion, than this?

BY these things we see what care was taken by the All-wise Providence of God for the preservation of True Religion, among this People, as it relates to the knowledge, and service of the True God.

What means were made use of for the preservation of the Faith of the Promis'd Saviour.

As for the other part of True Religion, the Belief of a Saviour, one can hardly imagine, they could want any information in this respect, the hopes of this being the great encouragement that supported *Abraham* in his enterprize, and the foundation upon which their nation was built.

Of T Y P E S.

BUT, however, they could not be better instructed in it, than was provided by their Law, if the Ceremonial part of their Religion was, as the *Jews* assert it was, an Emblematick, or Hieroglyphick representation of the dispensation of the *Messias*, and the Qualifications necessary to such, as would be made partakers of the benefits of it.

THIS

THIS was a way of instruction, as I before observed, very proper for this People, *Burnett.* and very well understood by them. For as they had lived in *Egypt*, a Nation accustomed to such Hieroglyphical Emblems, they knew how to interpret the meaning of them, as well, as we do those Pictures, we may have seen of the Passions, the Senses, and the Seasons of the year.

BUT this was not a way of speaking peculiar only to *Egypt*, but was common to all the Eastern nations: And we see throughout the whole Scripture-Story, there is nothing more frequent, than the use of Parables, and Similitudes, and typical resemblances upon almost every occasion.

So that it is no wild imagination to suppose, that this might be the intention of the Legal Ceremonies: And if it was, a little hint would enable them to find it out, and when once discover'd, those Types, and Figures would not only convey a more lively Idea to their minds of the things represented by them, but would more effectually preserve them in their Memory.

BUT how probable soever this may seem, 'tis hard to know certainly, whether it was so, and we can never have such sufficient evidence of it, as to build any argument upon it: But thus much is certain, that there is a great resemblance between some of these Ceremonies, and some parts of the Christian Dispensation, which we call the Dispensation of the *Messiah*.

THE Lifting up the Brazen Serpent; The Sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb, without Spot, or Blemish; The sending the Scape-Goat into the Wilderness with the Sins of the people upon it; The High Priest's going into the Holy Place at the Great Expiation once a Year to present the Blood of the atonement before the Lord; These are all so like what is taught of the *Messias*, that one can hardly think, but they must have been intended, as signs and representations of what He was to do at His coming; if we may judge in this case, as we do of Pictures, which we usually, and very justly say, are the Pictures of such, or such things, or persons, by the resemblance that appears between them.

AND as in a Family where Pictures are preserved, with great veneration, as the resemblances of such and such Ancestors, we have no reason to doubt, but they were so, or, at least, were intended to be so; so we have as little reason to doubt, unless we have some manifest, and more cogent motive to the contrary, but that these Legal Ceremonies were enjoined, as Pictures of the dispensation of the *Messias*, when we have the antient tradition of the *Jews* for it, who were the Family, and Household of God, and had the keeping of the Oracles of God.

BUT be this as it will, there were not wanting other means to preserve the Idea of the Promis'd Saviour in the minds of this People.

THEY had been bred up from *Abraham's* time, not only in the general notion of the Promise, but in a great desire of it, and great expectations of the Blessings they were to reap from it, and had, no doubt on't, been instructed in every thing, that their fore-fathers knew concerning it.

'Twas upon this account, that they valued themselves upon their being the Seed of *Abraham*, because the Promis'd Saviour was to descend from Him, and in His Seed all the Families of the Earth were to be Blessed: And 'tis natural to imagine, that every Parent would inform his Children of the Privileges they were intitled to:

AND they had great assurances from their Father *Jacob*, that all the Promises of God should be made good to them, not only in the Inheritance of the Land of *Canaan*, which he divided amongst the Tribes, but also in the Coming of the Expected *Shiloh*, and the desire of all Nations; as the Septuagint expresses it.

BUT notwithstanding this general notion they had of a Saviour, and of the Great Happiness to be expected from Him, they had not yet had any information of the Character of the Person, by whom this salvation was to be wrought, any further than of His being the Seed of *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*; nor did they know any thing of the manner how this Great Blessedness they expected from Him, was to be convey'd to Mankind: And as this was necessary to be made known to them one time or other, so we read how from a particular occasion given, God here vouchsafes them a Revelation of that matter, viz.

THAT whereas they were so terrified at His speaking to them, as to desire He would not speak to them in that manner any more, He promises, that He would hereafter speak to them by a Prophet, like unto Moses, one from amongst their Brethren,

Burnett. thren, one of their own nature, like themselves, whom, *if they refus'd to hear, He*
 would require it at their hands :

THE words are these, *I will raise them a Prophet from among their Brethren, like unto Thee, and will put my words in His mouth, and He shall speak unto them, all that I command Him, and it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken to my words, which He shall speak in my name, I will require it of him*, Deut. xviii. 18, 19.

THE literal meaning of these words is plain : Here is evidently a single Person spoken of, who was some time or other to be sent to this People : And as this Person was to be a Prophet like *Moses*, 'tis natural to conclude, that He should bear the same Characters, and be indued with the same Powers with *Moses* : And if it be reasonable to infer, that he was to be a Deliverer or Saviour, as *Moses* was, this is the very Idea we have shewn to be understood, by *Bruising the Serpent's head*. And if this Bruising the Serpent's head, and the Redemption intended by it, can be reasonably thought to be that Blessing, which God design'd to be convey'd to all Mankind through the Seed of *Abraham*, it is naturally implied, that this Prophet, who was to come, should be the Person, by whom this Redemption should be wrought,

AND if, by being *a Prophet like unto Moses*, it is reasonable to infer, that He should not only be a Saviour, as *Moses* was, but also a Lawgiver, and a Mediator of a new Covenant, and indued with the like Power of Miracles with Him, this plainly intimates what the Method was to be, by which this Salvation was to be effected, and this Great Blessing promis'd should be convey'd to Mankind, *viz.* by giving them a New Law, and a New Covenant, confirmed by Miracles, as the *Mosaic* Covenant had been :

AND whereas I have before shewn, that by *Bruising the Serpent's head* was meant, the recovering the world from the Wrath of God, and restoring them to Holiness, Happiness, and Immortality ; it is here implied in these words, if this Prophet was to be that Seed of the Woman, that this Covenant of Salvation, which He was to open to Mankind, was to be a Covenant of Reconciliation, and the Laws He was to give were to be Laws of Holiness, under the Promise of a Resurrection to Everlasting Life, and Happiness.

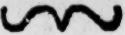
AND whereas the coming of the *Seed of the Woman to bruise the Serpent's head*, was a Blessing intended for all Mankind, if this was to be effected by the means of a Covenant of Reconciliation, and Laws of Holiness, it is hereby implied, that this Covenant, and these Laws, which this Prophet was to deliver, should be such, as should be calculated for, and offer'd to all the world.

AND as the reason of this Promise to the people at that time, was in answer to their own request, that they might not be terrified by the voice of God any more speaking to them in the manner He had done in the delivery of the Law of *Moses*, so it is thereby naturally implied, that this Law and Covenant to be delivered by this Prophet, should not be attended with those Circumstances of Terrour, that the Law of *Moses* had been.

And, *Lastly*, WHEREAS it is here said, that they should *hear this Prophet*, and if *they did not, God would require it at their hands* ; by which is to be meant, that He would severely punish, if not destroy them, (see *Acts* iii. 23.) by this it seems to be naturally implied, that this Law, and Covenant delivered by this Prophet, should be the last that He would vouchsafe to them, and if they rejected these, there would nothing remain for them, *but a fearful looking for of Judgment*.

ALL this seems to be plainly intimated in this general Promise compar'd with what had gone before ; And here is nothing forced, or unnatural in this interpretation, nothing but what is easy, and rational : And if so,

As this was a wise provision at that time to prepare the minds of this people beforehand by this general, and distant hint, for that Great change, which should be wrought by this Prophet, when He should come, that however highly favour'd *Moses* was by God, and what regard soever they had for Him, they must remember, that there was another to come after him who should be prefer'd before Him, from whom they must expect another Set of Laws, and a new, and a better Covenant ; So it shewed them what Ideas they were to carry along with them of this Saviour to come, and the Redemption to be wrought by Him, *viz.* that it was a Spiritual Redemption, as it was to be effected in a Prophetick way, by a Law and Covenant of Holiness, on obedience to which their Redemption would so entirely depend, that

that without it they would have no benefit by Him, but be expos'd to the greater *Burnett.* condemnation, *as God would require it at their hands.* 

C O R O L L A R Y.

AND if so, Then, if we shall hereafter find, that there was any Person appear'd in the World under the Character of this Prophet, that was to come, and if He came with the offer of New Laws, and a New Covenant to the *Jews*, of such a nature, and in such a manner, as are here describ'd, and was rejected by them; and if after this, *God did require it at their hands*, and remarkably pour'd out his Vengeance on them in the total destruction of their Temple, City, and Commonwealth; this would be a great argument of the Authority of that Person, that He was what he pretended to be, as likewise of the Credibility of this History: But this by the bye.

AND thus we see what care was taken to preserve the true Knowledge of the Promis'd Saviour, and to give this people a true notion of that Happiness they must look for from Him:

AND if this Interpretation of this Promise of a Future Prophet, that God would raise up to them, be allow'd, this teaches us what we may naturally expect to find in a further History of this people.

FOR, as here is a Revelation of several things, which were to be fulfilled in this Great Prophet, whom we conceive to be the Promis'd Saviour; and as these things, tho' of the greatest Importance to be known, were yet but imperfectly discover'd, as being only intimated in general words, and left to be drawn out by rational Inferences; So we may from hence not only conclude, that some provision would be made in after-times for the preservation of these Ideas amongst them, but also that they would be some time or other more fully laid open, and explain'd to them.

AND as this, in the nature of the thing, requires Prophecy, so we may by consequence not only expect to read of Prophecy in a regular History of this people, but also of such Prophecy, as particularly related to these things; that is to say, such as should relate to a New Revelation of New Laws, and a New Covenant of Pardon and Reconciliation, calculated for the Happiness of all Mankind, and confirm'd by a Divine Power.

AND as it will be a great addition of Credibility to this Scripture-History, if we afterwards find it agreeing in this Instance; so it will be likewise a strong Confirmation of the Sense we have taken this Promise in.

WHETHER the Scripture History agrees in this particular shall be consider'd by-and-by.

THERE is something else still to be taken notice of in this place, relating to the Law of *Moses*, which will be worthy our serious consideration, as answering punctually to what, we formerly observ'd, was necessary to be provided for.

The Law about Virginity accounted for.

As for Instance: I have already taken notice, That the first Promise of a Saviour was deliver'd to the World under the character of the Seed of the Woman: And I have likewise taken notice, that, if it was intended by this Expression, that this Saviour should be the Seed of the Woman only, and that Woman a Virgin, there was a necessity of some means to be prescrib'd, whereby this matter might certainly be known.

AND we may further add to this, that if any method for this purpose were provided, it ought to be of a Publick nature, because the Reason of it was of a Publick concern, which every one had a Right to be satisfied in: And if so, then as a thing of this Publick nature must be naturally prescrib'd as a standing Rule, and therefore have the force, and authority of a Law, which every one should be oblig'd to submit to; so 'tis natural to expect this Method should be prescrib'd at that time, when they receiv'd the Body of their Laws.

Now, that this was the sense and design of that Promise, we shall have reason sufficient to convince us hereafter; and tho' it does not appear, that *Moses* knew this, there being no probable way to find it out by reason, and we find no hint of any such Revelation in, or before, his time, yet we see a wonderful provision made for this purpose, not only in the Laws relating to Virginity, which prescrib'd cer-

Burnett. tain Rules about it, and punish'd unchastity with an Infamous Death, and therefore oblig'd all Virgins to the nicest Caution of themselves, and all Parents to the strictest guard upon their Children for the Safety of their Life and Honour, but also in the appointment of the Waters of Jealousy, by which it was provided, that in case of doubt, their Innocence might be tried by a standing Miracle; so that whenever the Promis'd Saviour should be born, this Character of him might be so evidently prov'd, as to leave no room for the least Suspicion. And from hence we see the Wisdom of those Laws, which are sometimes objected against as Immodest, and Ridiculous. We see here a weighty, and important reason for them, as they had a relation to the Promis'd Saviour, and we see there was a necessity of something of this kind, from the nature of the Promise itself: And as this could not be found out by Reason, and was not yet made known by Revelation; so it was what God alone could know, and He alone could provide for: So that these very Laws, which provide beforehand, for a thing unknown, and not to be discover'd, till After-Ages, are so far from affording a just objection to the Lawgiver, that they are a strong proof of that Authority they pretend to be commanded by, and shew the divine hand that gave them.

IF there be any difficulty relating to the Law of the tryal of Virginity, as to the uncertainty of it; However it may be so among us, yet it might not be so among them. This will depend upon the custom of those countries; for we may reasonably think, that, this Law being made, all methods would be taken to make it effectual, which the Nature of the Case, and the importance of it would naturally direct them to: And their custom of keeping their Daughters within Doors, (from whence they were call'd *Conceal'd*) and their early marriages, which, some say, were at twelve Years old, might, among many others, very much contribute towards it. But this by the bye.

The Reason of the Law about Genealogies.

Secondly, ANOTHER thing we have before taken notice of, is the Necessity there was, some time or other, of some means to be provided for the distinction of families, that since the Promis'd Saviour was to be born of the seed of *Abraham*, and of the line of *Isaac*, His Pedigree might certainly be proved at his coming.

AND for this reason we may here likewise further add, that if any thing were done in this kind, it is natural to expect to find it done before they were mixt with other people; And this being likewise of a Publick concern, as we may expect to find it done in a Publick way, by the Authority of Law; so we may here observe, what a wonderful Provision is made for this purpose in the Law of *Moses*.

FOR the Children of *Israel* are not only divided into several Tribes, but each Tribe into its several Families: And as every Tribe had a distinct Inheritance, which oblig'd them to keep Genealogies of their several Families; so, to make them more exact, and punctual in this, no alienation of any Inheritance was allow'd, for longer than the year of Jubilee, which return'd every fifty years, and then every one that could clear his Pedigree, and make out his Right to the Inheritance of his Ancestors, was to be reinstated in the possession of it: This made it every one's Interest to preserve his Genealogy: But that which still further contributed to this, and made them still more careful in this matter, was the Law of lineal Retreats; that is, Upon failure of an Heir in any Family, the next of Kin was to be Heir at Law, which obliged every Tribe, not only to take care of their own Genealogy, but those also of the several Families of their Kindred; that by knowing the several degrees of Proximity of Blood, they might be able at any time, upon failure of an Heir, to make out their title to the Inheritance of their Fathers.

THIS was the method to be taken throughout their Generations; so that when the fulness of time should come that this Promis'd Saviour should appear to the world, he might by this means as easily and certainly prove his lineal descent from *Abraham*, as we can ours from our immediate Parents.

AND thus we see what care was taken thus far for the Preservation of the True Religion amongst this People, as it consists in the Knowledge of the one True God, and Faith in the Promis'd Saviour: We see here what care was taken not only to preserve the General Ideas of this Saviour, and the manner of our Redemption by him, but of such Laws also, as were necessary for the accomplishment of the Promise in the most difficult and doubtful Circumstances.

Various

Various Revelations necessary after Moses's time.

Burnett.
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T H E R E were several things then left unreveal'd, because they were not yet necessary to be known, and as these were reserv'd for future Revelations, as the Nature of the thing, or the Circumstances of the people should call for them, so that nothing might be wanting in its proper season, we shall see them all afterwards delivered to them in the sequel of these Holy Writings.

W H A T these things necessary to be Reveal'd in after-times are, we have, in a great measure, discover'd already, and it will be a remarkable Instance of the Consistence, and Credibility of these writings, if the Revelations hereafter delivered in them be such as, we have before shewn, might one time be expected, as necessary in the nature of things.

I H A V E before shewn, that in the first Promise of a Saviour to come, as there is no time so much as hinted at, when this shall come to pass, so there was a necessity that some time or other, the World should be inform'd of this, as likewise of the Marks, by which He should be known at his coming.

A N D as I have also before shewn the necessity of the frequent renewal of the Promise to assure the world of the certain performance of it, lest their hopes, through length of time, should droop; so there is a like necessity of giving them true notions of it, and a frequent revival of them, lest they should happen to wear off, or be corrupted: And as this could not be done, without Prophecy, so there was by consequence a necessity of frequent Prophecies relating to this matter, to be delivered at sundry times, according as there should be occasion for them.

A N D lastly, I have likewise before shewn, that as the Promis'd Saviour was to be *a Prophet like unto Moses*, so He was to give New Laws, and a New Covenant, and that a Covenant of Reconciliation, and Laws of Holiness, intended for, and adapted to all Mankind, and that the Salvation He was to procure for them, should be a Spiritual Salvation, confirmed by the Power of Miracles:

A N D whereas all this, however certainly, yet is but darkly and imperfectly intimated, and is only to be discovered by rational deduction, I have likewise shewn, it is reasonable to expect, that if these things were really intended by the Promise, some future Revelations would be made, to preserve these Ideas in the people's minds, and more fully, and clearly to explain, and confirm them to them.

S o that here is a vast compass of matter still behind for future Revelations, which may be expected in a History of this people, and 'tis an eminent, and remarkable instance of the Consistence, and Credibility of the Scripture History, that we see it punctually answer in all these respects.

The Scripture Prophecies consider'd.

F O R as we have already taken notice of a frequent repetition of the First Great Promise of a Saviour, though in different Expressions, before *Moses's* time, wherein He, who is in one place stiled, *The Seed of the Woman, who should bruise the Serpent's head*, is afterward, several times, called *The Seed in whom all nations should be blessed*, and in another place, *The Shiloh*, or, as the Septuagint, *The Expectation of all Nations*.

A N D as this Promise is afterward renew'd to the Children of *Israel*, and the expected Saviour is represented as *a Prophet like unto Moses*, so afterwards, when the world grew dispos'd for further discoveries, and things became ripe for Revelation, we have an account in the following Books of a Succession of Prophets sent by God to inform His people of what was necessary from time to time.

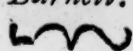
W E read here of various Revelations made, and as the occasions of the people were different, or the nature of the thing requir'd; so the Revelations rise in different steps, and degrees.

S o that the farther we read, the farther we see into the great design: The Ideas multiply, and inlarge upon us, and as we draw nearer to the accomplishment of the Promise, they shew themselves in a clearer, and fuller light, 'till the whole contrivance is drawn out at length, and is set forth in its full proportion.

T o evince this more particularly, let us consider the several things before mentioned, which call'd for a future Revelation.

Prophecies

Burnett.



Prophecies of the Time of the Saviour's coming.

THE first thing we have observ'd of this kind, was, The time of the Promis'd Saviour's coming: And as this was absolutely necessary some time or other to be made known to the world, so we read of several Prophecies relating to it, which I shall but just hint at, as being well known.

THE first of these is in *Gen. xlix. 10.* *The Sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a Law-giver from between His feet, until Shiloh come, and to Him shall the gathering of the people be.*

IN which words here is a plain prediction of a Person that was to come, to whom the People, or *Gentiles* should be gathered, who is called the *Shiloh*, which signifies, *He, who is to be sent*, and as the *Septuagint*, and Other translations have it, *The Expectation of the Nations*. Why I take this Person to be the Promis'd Saviour shall be consider'd hereafter.

BY *Judah* is meant the Tribe of *Judah*: And by *Sceptre*, and *Law-giver* is meant *Dominion*, and *Government*.

AND when 'tis here said, that *these shall not be taken from Judah, until Shiloh come*; as it is implied on the one hand, that there shall be a *Commonwealth*, or *Government* erected in the tribe of *Judah*, governed by their own *Laws*, which shall continue 'till *Shiloh* come; so it is on the other hand intimated, that at His coming, this *Government* shall be dissolv'd, so soon as the *People*, or *Gentiles* shall be come in to Him.

THIS is the natural meaning of the words, and this is a rational, and consistent sense of them, agreeing with the nature, and reason of the *Jewish* dispensation.

FOR as I have already shewn, God set this People up as a *Separate Nation* for the preservation of the true Religion, in the *Worship* of the *One True God*, and the *Belief* of the *Saviour* to come, that so the rest of the world might be instructed by them, in the *Knowledge* of the *Truth*, 'till the *fulness of time* should come that the *Saviour* promis'd should appear; so when this *Saviour* should be actually come, and the *Nations* gathered to Him, as this *Separation* could be no longer needful, because all the world were now to be but one people under Him, there was a natural reason for the dissolution of that *Government*, which was erected for an end, which was now ceased.

So that, according to this Prophecy, the Time of the Promis'd Saviour's coming was to be before the destruction of the *Jewish* Commonwealth, which should be destroy'd so soon as the *Gentiles* should be gathered to Him.

A Second Prophecy of the Time of the Promis'd Saviour's coming.

ANOTHER Prophecy we read in *Haggai*, That He should come, while the second Temple was standing, which He should adorn, and glorify by His presence. *I will shake all nations, and the desire of all Nations shall come, and I will fill this House with Glory, saith the Lord of Hosts: The Silver is mine, and the Gold is mine, saith the Lord of Hosts: The Glory of this latter House shall be greater than that of the former, saith the Lord of Hosts: And in this place I will give Peace, saith the Lord of Hosts, ch. ii. ver, 7, 8, 9.*

IN these words, *The desire of all Nations* is spoken of, as to come, which implies, that there was some Eminent Person, whose coming all Nations, either then did, or in time to come would be in great *Desire*, and *Expectation* of: And why we justly conceive this Person to be the Promis'd Saviour, shall be shewn hereafter.

AND as it is here implied, that He should come during the continuance of the second Temple, so it is also insinuated, that He should come at a time, when all Nations should be in a great *Desire*, and *Expectation* of Him.

AND, as 'tis here said, that before His coming Great Changes should happen in the overthrow of diverse Empires, as is afterwards explained in the 22^d Verse; so it is likewise said, that at His coming *He would give Peace*: Which words, if they be considered, as spoken in opposition to those disturbances, which would naturally attend those great Changes, they must mean, that He would come in a time of *Peace*, and *Tranquility*: Or, if they be considered, as relating to the business He came about, which was to *bruise the Serpent's head, and destroy the works of the Devil*, by *Peace* must then be meant *Spiritual Peace*, or a reconciliation between God, and Man.

A third Prophecy of the Time of the Promis'd Saviour's coming.

Burnett.

WE have another Prophecy relating to this matter in *Malachi, ch. iii. ver. 1.* *Behold I will send my Messenger, and He shall prepare the way before me: And the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come into His Temple; even the Messenger of the Covenant, whom ye delight in, He shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts.*

IN these words here is a person spoken of, under the Character of *The Lord, whom the Children of Israel sought, or desired*, a Person, who was *their Delight*, one, who was to be the *Messenger of the Covenant*; which implies some Covenant God had promis'd, and they expected.

AND as here is a positive assurance given, that this Messenger should come, so it is here declared, as in the former Prophecy, that it should be during the second Temple, but not 'till a messenger should have prepared His way, and that then suddenly He should appear.

Now by this *Messenger of the Covenant, the Lord whom they sought*, we say, is to be meant the Promis'd Saviour, and what reason we have for this, shall likewise be shewn hereafter.

A fourth Prophecy of the Time of the Saviour's coming.

Lastly, WE have another Prophecy of this in *Daniel*, which I reserve to the last, as being of all others, the most particular and express, and which we read in *chap. ix. 24, 25, 26, 27.* *Seventy Weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon the Holy City, to finish transgression, and make an end of sin, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlasting Righteousness, and to anoint the most Holy. Know therefore, and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore, and build Jerusalem, unto Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and after sixty-two weeks the Street shall be built again, and the Wall, even in troublous times: And after sixty-two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, &c.*

IN these words here is a Period of seventy weeks fix'd, which is universally understood, according to the language, and custom of the *Jews*, of weeks of years, *Lev. c. xxv. v. 8.* that is four hundred ninety years, in which the great design, which had been so long carried on, and expected with so much impatience, was to be accomplish'd. And that after seven weeks and sixty-two weeks the *Messiah* (the known character of the Promis'd Saviour) shall come, and be cut off, and in the following verses it is plain, that it was to be before the destruction of *Jerusalem*.

THESE are all plain predictions of the time when the expected Saviour was to come.

BUT this would notwithstanding be of little use, unless He could be certainly distinguish'd at His coming: Many impostors would doubtless set up, as History informs us, that there did. Many pretenders there were among the *Jews*. *Josephus* made the Prophecies to centre in *Vespasian*, as the *Herodians* did in *Herod*, and the reason why *Lentulus* among the *Romans* engaged in the conspiracy of *Cataline*, was, as *Cicero* seems to intimate, in hopes that the known tradition of a Person, that was about that time to reign over all the world, might happen to be accomplish'd in Him, *Cic. Orat. Cat. 3.*

Now as such pretences would naturally arise from the general Promise, so this shews us an evident necessity of some Rules to determine such pretences by, and some Characters by which the True Person should be known.

THIS, in the nature of the thing, required Prophecy, and therefore, as I said before, there can be no regular History of this people, without several instances of this kind: And 'tis a remarkable Instance of the Credibility of this History, that it gives us a Series of Prophecies from time to time relating to this matter, in which the whole design is gradually laid open, as different occasions call'd for it.

The Characters by which the Saviour was to be known.

IN considering the several Characters of the Promis'd Saviour, I will instance only in such as are undeniable, as being delivered in plain words, taken in their most natural and obvious meaning, according to the Scripture Phraseology.

Now that I call the most natural, and obvious meaning of words, not only when they do literally, and immediately express the sense we understand them in, but also

Burnett. when things are represented in a Metaphorical, and Figurative, or in a Poetical, or Rhetorical strain, the words are understood according to the natural and known intention of such Expressions.

THUS when God is said *to come down*, and is describ'd, as having *Eyes, and Ears, and Mouth, and Nostrils, and Hands*, it would be an unnatural interpretation to understand these things according to the Letter: And so when 'tis said, that *the Wolf shall dwell with the Lamb, the Leopard with the Kid, and the Lyon eat hay with the Ox*, and the Infant shall play with *Serpents*; the most natural meaning of these, and such-like expressions is to be taken from the apparent intention of them; they being plainly design'd to shew, in a figurative way, that there should be as great a change wrought upon the world, as there would be, if the natures of those Creatures were so chang'd, as those figures represent them. And so likewise as 'tis no unnatural figure to represent the Church of God by *Jerusalem*, or *Mount Zion*, or *the Mountain of the Lord's House*, and His Worship, by offering *Sacrifice and Incense*, so it will be no unnatural interpretation of such Expressions, to take them in such a figurative sense where the plain design of the context, or its agreement with other plain texts of Scripture, directs us to it.

THIS is an observation necessary to be made, when we are concern'd with a book, that, according to the Eastern way of speaking, abounds with figures and similitudes, and those sometimes very bold, and unknown to these distant ages, and countries: But, however, this interpretation of them is what is common to all people, in all places, and languages, and without it no language could be understood.

THIS necessary caution being laid down for the prevention of impertinent Cavils, I now proceed to inquire into the characters given us, by the Prophets, of the Promis'd Saviour.

THERE are many very eminent, and remarkable ones; I will take notice only of some of the most material:

THE first of these shall be what I have already observ'd, *viz.* That He was to be a *Prophet like unto Moses*, and, as such, not only a Saviour, or Deliverer, but also a Lawgiver, and a Mediator of a New Covenant: That His Salvation was to be a Spiritual Salvation by the means of a Covenant of Reconciliation, and Laws of Holiness, which He should receive from the Mouth of God, and confirm by His Power, and all this intended for all the world.

As this was imperfectly hinted in the general Promise to *Moses*; so we see it afterwards confirm'd, and explain'd in the succeeding Prophets:

WE read in *Isaiah* of an Eminent Person spoken of, who was to *come forth, a Rod out of the Stem of Jesse, and a Branch out of His Roots*; and the *Spirit of the Lord was to rest upon Him, the Spirit of Wisdom, and Understanding, the Spirit of Counsel, and Might*, or miraculous Power, *the Spirit of Knowledge, and Fear of the Lord*, so that He should not judge after the sight of His Eyes, nor reprove after the hearing of his Ears, *Isaiah xi. 1, 2, 3.*

AND to the same effect is that other passage of the same Prophet, *chap. xlii. ver. 1, to the 7th*; where this Person on whom the *Spirit of the Lord was to rest*, is call'd *His Servant, whom He would uphold, His Elect, in whom His Soul delights.*

OF this Person it is there said in the following words, that He should bring forth Judgment to the Gentiles—That the *Isles should wait for His Law*.—That He should be given for a Covenant of the people, for a Light of the Gentiles, to open the blind eyes, to bring the Prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house.

THE same Ideas are repeated in *chap. lxi. 1, 2, &c.*

TO the same purpose, in effect, we read in *Jeremiah*, *ch. xxxi. 31, 32, 33, to 36.* Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new Covenant with the House of Israel, and the House of Judah: Not according to the Covenant that I made with their Fathers, in the day that I took them out of the land of Egypt.—But this shall be my Covenant after those days, saith the Lord: I will put my Law in their inward parts, and write it in their heart, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.—I will forgive their Iniquity, and I will remember their Sin no more, &c.

NOTHING can be more plain, and express, than this.

AND the Extent of this Covenant is not only intimated in the texts above to reach to the Gentiles that sat in darkness, *Isai. xlii. 4, &c.* but we have it likewise fully express'd

express'd in many other places, *Isa. lxi. 8, 9.*—*I will make an Everlasting Covenant with them, and their Seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their Offspring among the people; all that see them shall acknowledge them, that they are the Seed whom the Lord hath blessed.*

IN which words here is not only a promise of an Everlasting Covenant, which shall be offer'd to the *Gentiles*, but it is plainly implied, that by virtue of this Covenant the Great Promise should be fulfill'd, of an universal blessing to all Nations.

THE same thing is set forth by *Isaiah*, ch. ii. 2, 3. by *Micah*, ch. iv. 1, 2, 3. by *Zephaniah*, ch. ii. 11. and iii. 9, 10. by *Zachariah*, ch. ii. 10, 11, 16. and viii. 20, 21, 22. And last of all by *Malachi* in the plainest words, ch. i. 10, 11.—*I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of Hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand; From the rising of the Sun to the going down of the same, my Name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place shall incense be offer'd to my Name, and a pure offering.*

AND as all this was to be effected by the Root of Jesse, who should stand for an *Ensign of the people*, to whom the *Gentiles* should seek, *Isai. xi. 10.* By Him who is the *Servant of the Lord*, His *Elect* on whom He would put his Spirit, who was to bring forth Judgment to the *Gentiles*, *Isai. xlii. 1, 2, 3.* Who is afterwards call'd by *Malachi*, *The Messenger of the Covenant*, ch. iii. 1:

So we have an account by what works this Covenant should be confirm'd, *Isa. xxxv. 3, 4, 5, 6.* That the *Eyes of the Blind* shall be opened, and the *Ears of the Deaf* unstopped; that the *Lame* shall leap as an *Hart*, and the *Tongue of the Dumb* sing.

THUS we see what an agreement here is between these several Prophecies in after-times with the Promise of a *Prophet like unto Moses*, at such a vast distance of time before, by which not only our Interpretation of that Promise is justified, but also it appears, that the same thread is carried on, and the same Person aim'd at thro' them all.

The Promis'd Saviour to be a King.

ANOTHER Character of the Promis'd Saviour was, that He was to be a King sitting upon the throne of *David*.

THIS is an Idea of Him, that runs thro' the whole Scripture. In *2 Sam. vii. 12, &c.* God had promis'd to establish the throne of the Kingdom of *David* for ever. The establishment, and preservation of this Kingdom, He there calls His *Mercy* to *David*, as His taking away the Kingdom from *Saul* is call'd the departing of his *Mercy* from Him, ver. 15.

THE after Prophets speak of this Promise, as an *Everlasting Covenant*, and the Person, in whom this Covenant was to be accomplish'd, is call'd the *sure Mercies* of *David*, *Isa. lv. 3.*

THEY look'd not on the Promise, as fulfill'd in their days, but speak of it as a thing to come: And as the Person aim'd at was to be a King, like *David*, so they sometimes speak of Him under his name, and expressly call Him *David*; *Hosea iii. 5.* In the latter days *Israel* should return, and seek *David* their King. *Jer. xxx. 9.* They shall serve the Lord and *David* their King, whom I will raise up unto them. *Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24.* I will set one Shepherd over them, even my *Servant David*—and *David* shall be a Prince over them.

THESE things were all spoken by the Prophets many years after *David* was dead.

THIS Person who is here call'd *David*, is in other places call'd, *The Branch of David*; *The Righteous Branch*; *The Righteous One*; *The Saviour*; *The Rod of the Stem of Jesse*; *The Branch of Righteousness*.

THUS *Jeremiah*, God will raise up unto *David* a *Righteous Branch*, and a King shall reign, and prosper, cap. xxiii. 5.

AND thus says *Zechary*, Rejoice greatly, O *Daughter of Sion*; Shout, O *Daughter of Jerusalem*: behold thy King cometh unto thee, *The Righteous One*, and *That Saviour*, lowly, and riding upon an *Ass*, and on a *Colt the Foal of an Ass*, ch. ix. 9. And so to the same purpose we find it in *Isa. xi. 1, 3, 4, 5.* *Jer. xxxiii. 14, 15.* And 'tis His Kingdom, which the Prophet *Daniel* speaks of, that, He says, the *God of Heaven* would set up the Kingdom of the *Stone*, and the *Mountain*, which should never be destroy'd, *Dan. ii. 44, 45.*

I NEED not multiply texts for a point so obvious, and known to every eye that reads the Old Testament.

Burnett. AND as the Scriptures are thus clear for the Kingly office of the Promis'd Saviour, so are they no less for the Sacerdotal.

The Promis'd Saviour to be a Priest.

THIS is another Character, by which the Promis'd Saviour was to be known, that He should not only be a Prince, but a *Priest upon His Throne*, as the Prophet *Zechary* expressly say, *chap. vi. 13.*

AS He was to be a Prophet like *Moses*, and a King like *David*, sitting upon the throne of *Israel*; so He was to be a *Priest after the Order of Melchizedek*; As the *cxxth Psalm* has been always understood by the antient *Jews*.

BUT whomsoever those words relate to, there can be no doubt of what is in general intended by them: The Office of a Priest, as it consists in being appointed to go between God and Man, to make reconciliation for Iniquity, this is naturally included in the very notion of the First Promise of a Saviour.

FOR, as He was to come to *bruise the Serpent's head*, by this, we have already shewn, was meant, His procuring Pardon, and Reconciliation for Mankind; and this is afterwards confirm'd by the Prophet *Daniel*, who, speaking of the *Messiah*, expressly says, that He should make *Reconciliation for Iniquity, make an End of Sin, and bring in Everlasting Righteousness*, *ch. ix. 24.*

AND as we have formerly shewn, that this Reconciliation was to be made by the means of a Sacrifice to be offer'd by Him, in remembrance of which the Institution of Sacrifices was ordain'd; so we afterwards find this Sacrifice was to be Himself:

THE Prophet *Daniel* says of Him, that He was to be cut off, but not for Himself, *ch. ix. 26.* And *Isaiab* expressly, That He should make *His Soul, or Life, an Offering for Sin*—That He should be wounded for our Transgressions, and be bruised for our Iniquities, that by His Stripes we might be heal'd, *ch. liii.*

THESE are plain marks of His Priestly Function, and what Sacrifice He was to offer:

BUT in the execution of this Office, He was not to conform to the Institution of Priesthood under the Law, that is, He was not to be of the Order of *Aaron*, but *Melchizedek*: And that, not because He was to be King, and Priest, as *Melchizedek* was, but because He was not to be subject to the Rules of the Legal Institution, relating to the Priesthood, as the Order of *Aaron* was.

Levit. xxi. IN this there were several things required about the Father and Mother, the descent, and genealogy, the days of their ministration, as to their beginning, and end, *ver 7, 13, 14.* viz. that the Mother should be one, that had not been a *Widow*, or *divorced*, the Father of the line of *Aaron*, for which a Genealogy was to be kept and produced: The beginning of their Ministerial life was at thirty, the end of it at fifty, and then the Days of their Ministration were accomplish'd.

BUT in the order of *Melchizedek*, there was none of this; here was no such Rules prescrib'd;

AND therefore, as the Promis'd Saviour was to be of this Order, He was not to be confin'd to the Injunctions of the Law, and as He was not to produce any Qualifications relating to His Father, His Mother, or Genealogy, nor was confin'd to any time for the beginning of His Ministration, so neither was He as to the ending of it, but His Priesthood was to continue as long as He should live, which is here called a Priesthood for ever.

THUS we see the several offices of the Promis'd Saviour describ'd.

AND as all these things that are said of Him must be conceiv'd, as being spoken by the Inspiration of God, to consist with the general design of His coming, which was to *bruise the Serpent's head*, and to be a *Blessing to all Nations*; So we must conclude, That what was before said of His Prophetick, must be equally true of His Kingly, and Priestly Offices, that they were originally appointed, and must be ordered so, as best to answer these intentions.

AND therefore, that His Kingdom should be such, as, in its extent, to include all Nations, and so order'd, in its nature, as to destroy the works of the Devil, and by consequence must be not only an Universal, but a Spiritual Kingdom.

AND likewise that the Reconciliation He was to make, as a Priest, should be such, as should not only be sufficient for, but actually extend to all Mankind.

THIS is a natural, and reasonable Inference, and it is a great argument of the Credibility

Credibility of the Scripture History, that we find it consistent both with Reason, *Burnett.* and itself: For we find all this taught by the Prophets.

FOR 'tis not only said, by the Prophet *Isaiah*, that when the Redeemer shall come, *all the Earth shall see the Salvation of God*, chap. lii. 10. and by consequence shall be sharers in the means, that shall be used for that end, and the benefits intended by them; But 'tis also said, That his Dominion shall be from Sea to Sea, from the *river unto the ends of the Earth*, Pf. lxxii. 8. That *all Nations and Languages shall serve Him*, Dan. vii. 14. That He shall reign over the Saints for ever, Dan. vii. 27. and bring in *Everlasting Righteousness*, Dan. ix. 24. And as in His Reign *the Righteous shall flourish*, so 'tis expressly said, That *all people shall be blest in Him, and all Nations call Him Blessed*, Psalm lxxii. 17.

AND we read throughout the Prophets, that the time of the *Messias* is all along represented, as a time of Universal Love, and Peace, and Godliness; Wherein, as the Natures of people shall be chang'd, and all Malice, and ill-nature rooted out, *Isai.* xi. so God would give them a Heart to do His Will, and that *He would be their God, and they His People*, Ezek. xi. 19, 20.

THESE are some of the many Prophecies, that relate to the Promis'd Saviour in the Scripture, and these are such as shew the Nature of that Redemption, He was to work for us, and the Universal Extent of it.

THERE are a vast many more to the same purpose, but these are sufficient for my design, and they are such as are plain and intelligible: And as they were reveal'd from time to time, as the Circumstances of the world call'd for them, or the nature of the thing required, so we see they hang altogether, and have a manifest dependence one upon another, and are but as so many different explications of the several Steps the Promis'd Saviour was to take, in order to the End he was to come for, that is, How He was to *bruise the Serpent's head*, and How *all Nations were to be Blest in Him*.

THERE were several other Intimations given of Him, relating to the place of His Birth, that it should be in *Bethlehem of Judea*, Mic. v. 2.—Of His Life, that He should undergo great sufferings, and *be despised and rejected of men*, *Isai.* liii.—Of His Death, and Resurrection, that though He was *to be cut off from the land of the living*, yet *His Body should not see Corruption*, Pf. xvi. 10, 11. and notwithstanding His Death, *He should prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord should prosper in His hand*, *Isa.* liii. 8, 10.—Of His Ascension into Heaven, and session *at the right hand of God*, Psalm cx. 12.—Of His sending down various gifts upon the *Gentiles*, and after that a terrible day should come, as in *Joel* ii. 28, 29, to 32.

THESE things we think are all plainly reveal'd in these several texts, and what reason we have for it shall be shewn by-and-by:

AND from these Revelations, if rightly understood, we see what Knowledge was imparted to this people, the sum of which, in short, was this.

'TIS evident, they were sufficiently taught, that there is but one God, and who that one God is, as also to abstain from all Idolatrous Worship, and how to serve Him acceptably.

AND as for the Promis'd Saviour, they were plainly instructed, that He was *to destroy the Works of the Devil*, and on this account, that *all Mankind were to be Blest in Him*.

THAT this Blessing was to be conferr'd in a Prophetick way, by the Revelation of a New Covenant, and New Laws, Laws of Holiness *writ upon their Hearts*, and a Covenant of pardon, and reconciliation between God, and Man:

AND in order to this, that the Spirit of the Lord was to rest upon Him, and shew itself in all proper acts of *Wisdom, and Understanding, Counsel, and Might, &c.*

THAT He was to be a Priest to offer Sacrifice for this reconciliation between God and Man, though not of the Order of *Aaron*, but *Melchizedek*, and that this Sacrifice should be His own Life, and with this, He should *make an End of Sin*, that is, of all Sin-offerings for ever.

THAT after His Death, He should not continue in the Grave, nor *His Body see Corruption*, but He should live again, and nevertheless be a great Prince, sitting upon the throne of *David*, whose Dominion should extend to all nations, and *His Kingdom be without end*.

THAT His Kingdom should be a Kingdom of Righteousness, under which a

Burnett. Pure, and Holy Worship should be preserved, and a spirit of Love, Peace, and Godliness, should rule among all people.

T H A T He was to *fit on the Right hand of God*, and send down a great Effusion of Spiritual, and Prophetick gifts upon all sorts of people, as well Old, as Young, and after this, that a great and terrible day should come.

T H A T the Person by whom all this was to be effected, was to be the Seed of the Woman, born in *Bethlehem of Judea*, during the standing of the second Temple, and before the departure of the Sceptre from *Judah*.

T H A T before His appearing to open His Ministry, *a Messenger should come to prepare His way*, and that all should be accomplish'd *in seventy weeks of years from the going forth of the Commandment to restore, and build Jerusalem*.

T H E S E things they knew, as being plainly reveal'd, though they might not know how to reconcile them together: They knew not probably what was thoroughly intended by His being the Seed of the Woman, nor how to reconcile His dying a sacrifice, or offering for sin, with His being a King for ever:

T H I S was not yet necessary for them to know, and therefore, remained to be cleared up afterward: But they knew enough for their purpose.

A N D now when all things were thus laid open, that were necessary for those, and future ages to know, relating to the nature of the Redemption promis'd, the Person, by whom, and the manner how it was to be effected, and no further Revelation was wanting in these respects:

A N D when the People of God with whom these Oracles were lodg'd, were thoroughly purg'd from their proneness to Idolatry, which had so often call'd for Revelation, and therefore there was no longer need of it; Then God withdrew the Spirit of Prophecy, from amongst them, the end and reason of it being ceased.

B U T yet 'tis nevertheless worth your observation, because there was a great length of Time to be between the last Prophet, and the coming of the *Messias*, how He before-hand provided them with proper supports in that Interval, that their hopes might not droop, nor their faith fail.

F O R He had already foretold them of Great changes that should happen, and which they should, e'er long, see fulfilled, in the Great Empires of the world:

A N D as these were to be the fore-runners of the *Messias*, and were not to happen all at once, but at several times in distant periods; so when they should afterwards live to see any part of the Prediction fulfilled, the evident accomplishment of it in that Instance, would be a certain earnest of the future completion of the rest:

A N D as every New Change, that should happen, which appear'd to be foretold, would be a New assurance given to their Faith, so from these they might be as sure of the coming of the *Messias*, as they were, that they saw these Empires overturn'd.

A N D as these things, with what God had already given them, were sufficient to keep their hopes alive, and therefore no further Revelation could be necessary for this; so this might probably be the reason, for ought we know, why there was no further Revelations made to them, but God left them to improve the notices they had, which were already sufficient for their purpose, and wait for the completion of them.

T H U S have I led you through the Scripture History, and shewn you what methods were taken throughout, for the preservation of the true Religion in the world.

A s the Children of *Israel* were a people chosen, and set up by God for this very purpose, I formerly shew'd you, there was a necessity that they should be informed in all things necessary to that end:

A N D as I have before shewn, what the True Religion of Sinners is, *viz.* that it consists not only in the Knowledge and Service of the True God, but also in the Obedience of Faith in the Promis'd Saviour, so in the preservation of True Religion amongst them; I likewise shew'd there was a necessity that they should be supplied with a suitable provision, and proper assistances for these great Ends:

A N D as this Book contains a History of this People, I have all along shewn, how it agrees accordingly, and what care, it acquaints us, was taken in this matter; not only in the Laws that were given to them, and the various Providences exercis'd towards them, but in a Series of particular Revelations, and Prophecies: Which as they were carried on through several ages by different persons, and not only deliver several things in their own nature necessary to be reveal'd, and of which some Re-

velation

velation was one time or other to be expected, but also have a manifest coherence *Burnett.* with, and dependance upon one another; so they are a sufficient proof of the Consistence, and Credibility of the Scripture History, in which they are handed down to us; which is all that I aim'd at upon this Head, and all that my Method requir'd of me.

WE are now to consider this people in another view, as not only set up for the preservation of true Religion among themselves, that they might be a Holy people to the Lord, but as a Conduit, or Canal, whereby it was to be convey'd to others, that all Nations might, by their means, be brought to the Knowledge of the Truth, and a proper disposition to enjoy the Blessing of the Saviour promis'd.

AND as there was a necessity of some methods of Providence, in order to bring about this end; so it will be a great addition to the Credibility of this History, to find it agree in this respect.

WHETHER it does this, is our next Inquiry: But before I proceed upon it, there is one thing to be settled, upon which the whole of what I have said depends, and that is, How we know that we rightly understand those Scriptures, which we call Prophecies, and Revelations, when we apply them to an Expected *Messias*, and that they were really Prophecies relating to that Person, and deliver'd with that view, which has here been represented, and have not been fulfill'd in any other.

C H A P. XIV.

The Scripture Prophecies to be rightly understood by us, prov'd.

THIS is a very material point, and ought not to be pass'd over without examination: And, for the clear resolution of it, we may observe,

First, THAT the sense we take the Prophecies in, as relating all to one and the same Person, and End, is most likely to be the true sense of them, as being allow'd by those, who were most likely to know their meaning, I mean the Ancient *Jews* before our Saviour.

FOR, as this Book was deliver'd to their keeping, and writ in their own native language, they may reasonably be suppos'd to understand their own phraseology best.

AND as their Ancestors were the people to whom the Prophecies were spoken, 'tis reasonable to think, they were let into the knowledge of them in some degree, where they could not be otherwise understood:

FOR, whatever distant aspect these Prophecies relating to a Saviour had to future times, (as 'tis plain they all speak of things to come) 'tis certain, they had each of them a particular relation to those Persons, or People, to whom they were particularly and severally spoken, and were intended for some particular End at that time, which those Persons, or People, were then immediately concern'd in:

BY which I do not mean, that they were all spoken in a double Sense; but only that they were always intended to supply some necessity, that call'd for such Revelation at that time, when they were deliver'd.

EVERY one that reads them, may partly see the immediate occasion of them; that they each of them was spoken, either as a Confirmation of the Faith of those they were delivered to, who, at that time, might be wavering, or doubtful, either thro' their own weakness, or the Scoffs of Infidels, as was sometimes the case: Or else, as a Comfort to support their hopes under present or approaching Calamities:

THIS was visibly the immediate design of them: And if so, there was a necessity of their being understood in some measure, or else the present End could not have been attain'd.

AND if there was a necessity of their being understood, either they must have been deliver'd in such a way of speaking, as the people were capable of understanding of themselves, or else they must have been explain'd to them, by the Prophets that deliver'd them, so far as that Explanation was necessary.

THAT they might be ordinarily capable of understanding them of themselves, is very reasonable to think, however difficult they appear to us:

WE, as a learned Prelate observes, labour under disadvantages, which they had not: We are ignorant, in a great measure, of their way of speaking: "The Hebrew, as other Eastern Languages, is intirely different from the *European*. Many things are there left to be supplied by the quickness of the reader's apprehension, " which

Burnett. " which are with us express'd by proper words, and repetitions. Particles disjunctive, and adversative, significative marks of Connexion, and of Transition from one Subject to another, are often omitted here : Dialogues are carried on, Objections answer'd, Comparisons made, without notice in the discourse ; And thro' frequent change of Persons, Tenses, and Numbers, we are left to guess who are the persons spoken of, which gave no difficulty to them, whose living language it was.

" AND there are several other difficulties we are imbarra's'd with from the nature of the Prophetick Stile ; as also from the little or no order the Collectors of these Prophecies have placed them in." See *Def. of Christianity, by the Bishop of Lichfield, Pref. p. 13, 14, 15.*

THESE are disadvantages, which the people of those times, wherein the Prophets lived, had not ; and therefore they might be capable of understanding those writings better than we can be, where the expression is dark and difficult.

AND accordingly we find from the *New Testament*, which I here consider only as an Ancient Book, that the people were well versed in the Prophetick Writings in the Days of our Saviour Christ.

HE appeals to those Writings for a Testimony to Himself : And, tho' He speaks to the Multitude, He bids them *Search the Scriptures*, manifestly implying, that the Prophecies relating to their *Messiah*, were such, as they did, or might understand : And if they did not see the relation those Prophecies bore to Him, it was their own Fault.

AND in another Place, where He is reproving His Disciples for their Unbelief of what the Prophets had spoken, He does not impute it to the darkness of the Prophecies, or the difficulty of understanding them, but to their backwardness to believe what was sufficiently reveal'd, if they had not been *slow of heart* to receive it.

'Tis true, indeed, some Prophecies were dark, and intricate for a time in some particulars, and 'twas necessary it should be so : For otherwise they probably would not have been fulfilled, as depending on the actions of free Agents.

BUT what was necessary to be known, was necessary to be explained, if it could not be known without it.

AND if they had any such Explications given them, 'tis natural to conceive that those Ideas would be handed down by tradition from generation to generation.

AND though some things might be mistaken, and some traditions corrupted, yet we cannot suppose but they would be right in the main, especially in the fundamental Articles.

AND therefore, when we find the tradition of a Saviour universally received amongst them, and that built upon the Authority of Scripture Prophecies, and those very texts, we make use of, applied to Him, we have no reason to doubt, but this was the true, and natural sense of them, though we at this distance who are strangers to the Eastern Phraseology, should not be able to make every thing out so clearly, as cavilling men may expect, and demand of us.

BUT this is not our case, nor do we depend upon them alone, for we have sufficient reason for our Interpretation of most of the texts I have here made use of, had we never known what the *Jews* have thought of them. For,

Prophecies of the Messiah understood in their natural meaning.

Secondly, THE Sense we take them in is such, as the plain, natural meaning of the words themselves, or other like plain expression of Scripture direct us to, considered and compared together.

TO make this appear beyond all doubt, let us look back upon the several Prophecies again.

TO begin at the first Promise to our First Parents, that *the Seed of the Woman should bruise the Serpent's head* ; 'tis plain here is a Person foretold to come, and from the occasion of the words, I have given you a natural and reasonable interpretation of them, viz. that whereas the Devil had brought them into a State of Sin, Misery, and Death, this Person should defeat the Cunning, and destroy the Works of the Devil, by procuring pardon and reconciliation for them, and restoring them to a state of Holiness, Happiness, and Immortality :

AND as this was a Blessing intended for them, and their Posterity, and the greatest that

that God could bestow upon them, and by consequence the Person, who was to do *Burnett.* this, was to be an Universal Blessing to all Nations, so 'tis reasonable to think, that this might be the General Character under which He might be expected, and ordinarily spoken of: However, when we afterwards read of a Person promis'd to come, *in whom all Nations should be Bless'd*, 'tis very natural to understand this of the Person spoken of before, who was to do that for all the world, which must be allow'd to be the greatest Blessing that God could bestow upon them.

AND as the tradition of this Promise would be naturally handed down to all Posterity, and a great desire excited in all the world for the coming of this Person: And as He was to be born of the Seed of *Jacob*, as He would therefore be more particularly desir'd, expected, and look'd for by the Children of *Israel*; So 'tis natural to conceive, that He might be commonly spoken of, as, *He, who was to come, or to be sent; The Desire of all Nations; The Expectation of the People; or, The Delight of the Children of Israel*, or the like: However, when we afterwards read of *Shiloh* coming, which signifies, *He who is to be sent*, and, *That the gathering of the People or Gentiles should be to Him*, or, as some translations have it, *He shall be the Expectation of the Nations*: And in another Place of one, who is, by way of Emphasis, call'd, *The Desire of all Nations, The Delight of the Children of Israel*, one whom they sought, and look'd for, is it not natural to understand this of that Person *in whom all Nations were to be Bless'd*? *Mal. iii. 1.*

BUT be this as it will: There can be nothing plainer than what we read afterwards of a Promise, of a *Prophet like unto Moses*, whom God would one Day raise up to His people.

AND as these words denote a single Person, so I may appeal to any one, whether they may not naturally imply, that He should bring a New Covenant, and New Laws, as *Moses* did.

AND if so, then as no one could be this Prophet spoken of, who did not come to them with the offer of a New Covenant, and New Laws, so if we read of a Person afterwards who is represented as to come under this very Character, is it not reasonable to think that He is the Man?

AND if it be reasonable, as I have before shewn, that this New Covenant and Laws should be offered to all the world, then, when we read in *Isaiah xi.* of a time to come when *there should come forth a Rod out of the Stem of Jesse, and a Branch out of His Root, on whom the Spirit of the Lord should rest, &c.* which manifestly betokens a Prophet of the House of *David*: And when 'tis said of Him, *ver. 10.* that He should *stand for an Ensign of the People, and to it should the Gentiles seek*, and that *He shall recover the remnant of God's people from the most distant nations*, which is the same thing, that was before spoken of *Shiloh*, that *to Him should the gathering of the people be*; *Gen. xlix. 10.*

AND when we afterwards read of a Person, on whom God would put *His Spirit*, and who should bring forth Judgment to the Gentiles, and whose Laws the Isles would wait for, who should be for a Covenant of the people, for a Light of the Gentiles, to open the blind eyes, and bring the prisoners and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house, *Isaiah, Chap. iv. ver. 1, 3, 5, 6.*

AND when this Person is called the Servant and Elect of God, *My Servant whom I uphold*, (by way of Emphasis) *My Elect in whom my Soul delighteth*; are not these plain tokens that these places refer to the same Person? for are not the Characters the same?

AND when we afterwards read in the plainest words possible in *Jer. xxxi. 31.* of a New Covenant, that was still to be expected, and *that not such a one, as they had, when they came out of the land of Egypt*, by which it appears, that the Prophet like unto *Moses*, was not yet come:

AND when we afterwards read in *Malachi, chap. iii. 1.* of a Person still to come, call'd, by way of Excellence, *The Messenger of the Covenant*, which naturally implies some known Messenger, and Covenant they expected, is it not reasonable to conclude, that this was the Covenant promis'd by *Isaiah*, and *Jeremiah*, and this Messenger the Person before spoken of, *on whom the Spirit of God was to rest; the Servant, the Elect of God, the Branch of the root of Jesse, the Prophet like unto Moses*?

AND as 'tis natural to conceive that these Promises so often repeated would excite a strange desire of the fulfilling of them, and particularly in the Children of *Israel*, so when we see this Messenger of the Covenant is particularly called *The Desire of all Nations*,

Burnett. Nations, the Delight of the Children of Israel, the Lord whom they sought, or look'd for, so these are plain tokens that this Messenger, and this Covenant were the same, that those Promises related to.

CAN there be any thing clearer than this ?

AND so again further ; If this Messenger of the Covenant, and the Branch of the root of *Jesse*, in *Isai. xi.* be the same person, as appears, when we in another place read of a Person, who was to come, called *The Branch*, by way of Emphasis, and the *Righteous Branch, the Saviour* ; and when 'tis said of this Branch, that He *shall reign as a King, and prosper* : And when *this King, the Branch*, is spoken of, not only as a King, but a *Priest upon His Throne*, and that even after *David*, and *Solomon* were dead, is it not reasonable to think, that the Person meant is the same in both places, and by consequence that *this King and Priest, The Branch*, is the same Person with *the Messenger of the Covenant*.

AND when we in another place read in plain words of a *Prince* that was to come, called, expressly by *Daniel, Messiah*, who should *make reconciliation for Iniquity, and be cut off, but not for Himself*, chap. ix. 26 :

AND when in *Isaiab* we read of the *Servant, the Elect of God, His Righteous Servant*, that He should *make His Soul, or Life an offering for sin, and justify many, whose iniquities He was to bear* ; that He was to be *wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our Iniquities, that by His Stripes we might be healed* ; is it not reasonable to understand the *Messiah* in *Daniel* to be the same Person with the *Elect, the Righteous Servant* in *Isaiab*, and the same thing to be aim'd at in both ?

AND if so, then if our Interpretation of the first Promise that *the Seed of the Woman should bruise the Serpent's head*, be true, viz. That the Person meant was to procure pardon, and reconciliation for Mankind, and to restore them to Holiness, Happiness, and Immortality, when we read of the *Messiah* spoken of in *Daniel*, as a Person who should *make reconciliation for iniquity, make an end of sin, and bring in Everlasting Righteousness*, is it not natural to conclude, that this *Messias* is that *Seed of the Woman* ?

NOTHING can be more reasonable than this Interpretation from a parity of Ideas in different places. This is a way that all reasonable men allow, of finding out the meaning of any author, to compare one place, and expression with another. And I have done it in this case with the utmost impartiality : Here is nothing forced, or unnatural, nothing but what is plain and obvious to every understanding, and discovers itself to us at the first view.

AND if these texts be rightly understood, this gives us a Key to the rest of the Scripture, and teaches us how to interpret a thousand other places : For it will be very reasonable to apply all such expressions as spoken to the same purpose, as appear to carry in them the same Ideas, and bear a natural relation to the same design, tho' there be no other particular character in them to direct us to it ; and tho' we, who know so little of the Prophetick stile and language, should not be able otherwise clearly to make it out.

THUS, for instance, since we see here was a New Covenant promis'd, which seems to imply an Abolition of the Old one ; when we afterwards read of sacrifices and oblations spoken of, as of no value or esteem with God, even whilst the Law was still in force ; 'tis reasonable to understand such expressions as relating to the time of the New Covenant, when these things were to be done away :

AND whereas this Covenant was to include all Nations, where-ever we find any such expressions, as relate to an Union of all people in the Worship of the True God, 'tis no force upon those texts to understand them of that time when this Covenant shall be deliver'd to them, and of that Person who is to be *the Messenger of it*.

AND so we may interpret a vast multitude of texts.

BUT be that as it will ; 'Tis evident there can be no reasonable doubt, but that these texts we have now examin'd are rightly understood ; for the Expressions are not only plain and intelligible in themselves, and have a manifest relation one to the other, but they carry on a regular consistent design :

WHEN we have already shewn from the nature of things, what reason there was to expect Prophecy, and when these Prophecies are such, as we have reason to expect, according to our meaning of them ;

AND when in our meaning, we have likewise shewn, they all conspire to make up an intire Scheme, thro' which the same Idea runs like a Warp thro' the whole

Webb, and the several Prophecies in it, are but like so many descriptions of the *Burnett*. different features of the same face, which, when united, make up a perfect Harmony. What better token can we have of Truth, than this?

BUT especially, when, as I said before, these Prophecies were always so understood by the antient *Jews*, who not only knew their own language best, and how to interpret it, but were descended from those very persons to whom these Prophecies were spoken, from whom probably they must have had some traditions about them, as either they themselves had understood them, or had had them occasionally explain'd to them by a succession of Prophets, that had lived amongst them.

BUT, *Thirdly*, WE have still further reason to understand them in our sense, as this has been confirm'd by several Prophets since those days: I mean our Saviour and His Apostles; who, as they have given full proof of their Mission from Heaven, that they were *Teachers sent by God*, we have reason to rest upon what they taught, as the truth of God. And they have not only confirm'd us in this general notion, that there had been a Promise given of a Saviour to come, but that many Prophecies of the *Old Testament* were spoken of Him.

THEY have not, indeed, particularly mention'd and interpreted all the several texts, that I have before hinted at, but only some of the more considerable: But as they have confirm'd the general notion of a Redeemer, or *Messiah*, to be rightly founded in that Book: And as the Texts that point to Him are appeal'd to by our Lord, as well known, and understood, or at least capable of being so, by all that would *search the Scriptures*:

So, whatever Texts we find there, that in their natural meaning must relate to Him, especially if they have been antiently so understood by the *Jews*, we have reason to think this meaning of them to be so far confirm'd, and justified, tho' not particularly mention'd by them.

BUT we have not only this general Confirmation of our sense of these texts, but we have several of them, relating to some of the most material points, particularly explain'd by them.

THE Promise to *Abraham*, that in *Isaac* should his Seed be called, meaning that Seed in whom all Nations should be Bless'd, is directly applied by *St. Paul* to the *Messias*, *Gal. iii. 16*. As likewise that afterwards to *Moses*, of a Prophet to be rais'd up like unto Him, is understood in the same sense by *St. Peter*, *Acts iii. 22, 23, &c.*

THE *cxth Psalm*, where *David* speaks of His Son, as His Lord, and afterward as a Priest after the Order of *Melchizedek*, is applied by our Saviour, and *St. Paul*, to the *Messiah*; and by the former is said to be spoken in Spirit, that is, by a Prophetick Inspiration, *Heb. vii. 17. Mat. xxii. 43.*

AND when He speaks in *Psalms xvi.* that His Soul should not be left in Hell, nor his Body see Corruption, He is expressly said to have spoken this by a Prophetick foresight of the Resurrection of the Christ or *Messiah* Promis'd, and that by this Resurrection He was to be advanc'd to the throne of *David*, according to the promise given to Him, that of the fruit of his loins God would raise up one to sit on his throne, which He here says was likewise spoken of the Christ, or *Messias*, *Acts ii. 25, &c. Ps. cxxxii. 11.*

AND so again, when our Saviour says, that He would send the Promise of the Father upon His Apostles, to enable them to be Witnesses of Him; and in the next words intimates, that this Promise of the Father was to be fulfill'd in their being endued with Power from on high, for which they were to wait at *Jerusalem*; And when by this enduing them with Power from on high, was apparently meant His sending the Holy Spirit upon them, it is from hence plainly to be inferr'd, that the sending the Holy Spirit in that manner, had been promis'd by the Father, *Luke xxiv. 48, 49.*

AND when those words of the Prophet *Joel*, wherein he speaks of God's pouring out His Spirit upon all flesh, &c. *chap. ii. 28.* are applied by *St. Peter* to this very event, we cannot reasonably doubt, but that this was one of those texts, wherein this extraordinary Gift had been promis'd by the Father.

THERE are several other texts applied by the Apostles in this manner, that is, as spoken not in an accommodated, but Prophetick sense: And this I take to be a sufficient argument, that this is the true sense.

FOR, if the Prophecies were dictated by God, we cannot doubt that to be the meaning of them, which God Himself directs us to understand them in; and therefore we cannot doubt that explication to be true, which we have from Christ and his Apostles, if they are allow'd to be teachers sent from God. AND

Burnett. AND tho' in some cases it should be suppos'd, that we might not have been able, many times, to find out, from the tenour of the Prophets words, that those texts so explain'd by Christ, and his Apostles, were to be understood in that sense, yet that is not a sufficient objection against it: For if they have so explain'd them, and were sent by God, we are as sure of their Explication, as we are sure of their Mission.

But *lastly*, THAT which puts our Interpretation beyond all doubt, is still behind, which is, that we have seen all these Prophecies fulfill'd in the sense of them; as we have them all centring in Jesus Christ, and the Redemption He has wrought for us.

WHETHER this be so, or not, shall be consider'd by-and-by: But if it be so, I say, it is an undeniable Proof, that they are, as we apprehend them, real Prophecies rightly understood by us, and that He is the Person meant by them.

FOR (to illustrate this by a foremention'd Instance) if there were a dispute about a Picture, whether it were drawn with any particular view, to represent, for instance, any particular Face, or Story; as the natural way to find out the Painter's design, would be to consider the likeness there is between them; So when we consider the Scripture Prophecies, as representations of a Person, and an Event to come, and afterward see a Person, and Event, exactly corresponding to them; we can no longer, with any reason, doubt, but that that Person, and that Event, were intended by them; unless there be any other Person they equally agree to: But this, I think, cannot be pretended:

The Prophecies not fulfilled before Christ.

THERE are several texts indeed, it must be own'd, that we apply to the Messiah, which the Modern *Jews*, since the coming of Christ, endeavour industriously to evade, by shewing the completion of them, in some other Person before his time: But the reason of this is manifest; they are forced to do this in their own vindication, to justify their rejection of our Saviour.

HOWEVER, let the thing be fairly made appear, and we are ready to give them up, as nothing to our purpose.

BUT after all that they, and other Infidels have done this way, 'tis evident to every impartial man, that there is not any one of those Prophecies, whose Completion they contend for, that agrees to the Person they apply them to.

THERE is no general Character can be given of any one, but in some parts of it, and in some respects, may agree to many others; but it is then only fulfill'd in its proper meaning, when all the parts center in one: And yet there is not any one of those texts, which they pretend to be fulfill'd before our Saviour, but has some eminent and material Character in it, that disagrees to the Subject they apply them to.

HAD any of them been fulfill'd before our Saviour, the Antient *Jews* of those days would have been the best judges of it: But they are so far from thinking them so, that they understood them all as we do. And at the very time of our Saviour's appearing, there was not only an universal expectation of a Saviour, promis'd by the Prophets, but also of a Saviour, under those very Ideas represented by the Scriptures*, viz. As, *He who was to come; That Prophet; The Christ; The Christ the Son of God, that was to come into the world; The Messiah that was to come; He that cometh in the Name of the Lord; The Christ the Saviour of the world; The Son of David; The King of Israel*:

AND as these things, I say, do evidently shew, that they thought these Scriptures not fulfill'd; so, if we and they have rightly understood them, 'tis certain they were not, and could not have been fulfill'd:

FOR, I have already shewn, that there is a Connexion between them; that they all depend upon one another, and have relation to the same one Person; and therefore they cannot be fulfill'd by any one, who has not fulfill'd them all.

SO that unless we find a Man, who came to make reconciliation for Iniquity by procuring pardon for Sin, and to restore us to Holiness and Immortal Happiness, and shew'd Himself to be a Blessing to all Nations; Unless we find a Man indued with the Spirit of Prophecy, that came to be a Light of the *Gentiles*, and brought a New Covenant, and New Laws, confirm'd by Miracles, and adapted to the Condition of all Mankind; A Man that lived a life of Contempt, and Affliction, and offer'd Himself a Sacrifice for Sin, and after Death *His body did not see Corruption*, but He was

* Matt. xi. 3. John vi. 14.—xi. 27.—i. 19, 20.—iv. 25. Mark xi. 10. John iv. 42. Matt. xxii. 42. John vii. 41, 42.—i. 49.—xvi. 12, 13.

rais'd again, and became a King, *sitting at the Right hand of God*, having dominion *Burnett.* over all People, Nations, and Languages given to Him, and sending down a vast effusion of Spiritual and Prophetick gifts upon His people of all Sorts, both old and young:

AND unless this man was born in *Bethlehem of Judea*, of the Seed of *David*, and the Tribe of *Judah*, and came during the Standing of the second Temple, in a Time of Peace, before the Determination of *Daniel's Weeks*, and the destruction of the *Jewish Commonwealth*; having a Messenger going before him, like another *Elias*, to prepare his way; unless, I say, we can find such a man, as this, these Prophecies do not appear to be fulfill'd;

AND if there be any such Person, He is the Man, and in Him our Interpretation is confirm'd by its Completion.

Now such a Completion, we Christians think, we have in Jesus Christ, in whom all these several Circumstances agree, like lines that meet in the same Centre: But whether this be so, or not, shall be consider'd by-and-by.

C H A P. XV.

The last thing requir'd in a History of the Children of Israel, found in the Scriptures.

THIS now proper to enquire into the last point, which the method I have laid down, and the nature of my argument, demands the consideration of, *viz.* What methods have been taken, from time to time, for the conveyance of the True Religion to other Nations, which had so carefully been preserv'd among this People.

IF you remember, I have already shewn the necessity of something of this kind: This was the great end of raising up this People, and keeping them a Separate Nation, that the True Religion being preserv'd, amongst them, the rest of the world might be so enlighten'd by their means, as to forsake their idolatrous, and other wicked Practices, and serve the One True God in the True Faith, and Expectation of the Benefits of the Saviour Promis'd.

AND as 'twas reasonable to expect, that some methods would be taken, that would naturally contribute to this end; so we find by this History, in the account of this people, that God had all along this design in view, in all His dispensations towards them.

IF we begin at *Abraham*, we may observe of him, that he is no sooner call'd from his Father's House, and Family, but he, and afterward *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, are kept continually in a travelling way, moving from place to place.

BY this they became known to all those people; and as we read how God remarkably bless'd them, and shew'd many distinguishing favours to them, and made them so considerable in the people's eyes, that they were afraid of their Power, and sought their Friendship, and enter'd into alliance with them, this was a very likely means of propagating their Notions there.

THERE is a Natural Curiosity to enquire into the manners, opinions, and religion of those we have to do withal; but there was a particular reason in this case to think, it would more remarkably shew itself:

FOR, as they were look'd upon as the Favourites of Heaven, or, as this History expresses it, *The blessed of the Lord*, Men would naturally inquire from whence this was; What God they served, and the manner How, to intitle them to so great blessings from Him: And by this means, every one of this numerous family might become, as it were, a Preacher of the True Religion, and an Instrument of promoting it, where-ever they came.

TWAS for the same End, probably, that God rais'd up *Joseph* to such eminent dignity in *Egypt*, and afterward brought *Jacob* and his family thither, that they coming into that Idolatrous nation, might enlighten them with their Light, and Knowledge, and by degrees draw them to the true Faith, and Worship:

AND 'twas for the same End, that He afterwards brought them out thence with such miraculous Judgments, and carried them into *Canaan* with so high a hand, and in so amazing a manner: It was, that His * name might be declared throughout ^{Exod. ix. 16.} all the Earth, as is particularly said in the case of *Pharaoh*; and that † all the Earth ^{xx. 9.} might be fill'd with the Glory of the Lord. ^{† Numb. xiv. 15, 21.}

AND as these things must naturally convince all people, that this God who could

Burnett. do such mighty things, must necessarily be the only Great, and True God; so one would hardly think it possible, but that it should prevail with many, and that many should be converted by it.

'T WAS for the same reason, probably, that God, tho' Good and Gracious to his Creatures, was yet pleas'd to make use of that seemingly cruel method of rooting out the *Canaanites* by the Sword, because there was no way so likely to convince the Heathen world of His Almighty Power, as this :

HAD He done it by Famine, or Pestilence, or other Methods, His hand would not have appear'd so clearly in it, because that might as well have been ascrib'd, to the Power of their own Gods, as Him : But in this way He left them no room to doubt, not only that the Work was done by Him, but that He, who could do this, was the only God.

FOR, as it was the Universal practice of the whole Heathen world, to put their several Nations under the protection of some Tutelar Deity, whose Power they usually judged of by their Victories over their Enemies ; so in this method God appeals to their own notions, and lets them see in their own way, that He was as much above other Gods, as His Power was greater than theirs : * And 'tis for this reason, probably, that He is so often call'd in Scripture, by way of Emphasis, *The Lord of Hosts*.

* Exod.
xviii. 11.

'T WAS for the same End, that God afterwards rais'd up this Nation to such eminent Dignity, and Glory, as we read He did in the Days of *David*, and *Solomon* :

† 1 Chr.
xiv. 17.

IN the Reign of *David*, 'tis said that † *the fame of him went out unto all lands, and that the Lord brought the fear of him upon all Nations*. And as the means, by which He did this, was by giving him Success against his Enemies; so the manifest reason of this Success was, as 'tis express'd by the holy *Psalmist*, that *His Glory might be declared amongst the Heathen, His wonders among all people, and that the Heathen might say, The Lord is King*.

Psal. xcvi.
3, 10.

BUT how high soever this Nation was advanced in *David's* Days, it was still more glorious, and powerful under *Solomon*.

|| 2 Chr.
ix. 26.

|| *HE reign'd, 'tis said, over all the Kings from the River Euphrates, even to the Land of the Philistines, and the Border of Egypt*.

AND as his great, and extensive trade carried the fame of him into far distant countries; so his Wisdom became so renown'd in all places, that *all the Earth* is said to have sought to Him, to hear the Wisdom that God had put into his heart.

1 Kings x.
24.

WE read of his friendship with the King of *Tyre*, and of a Visit made him by the Queen of *Sheba*, (a Great Princess, that is said to have reign'd over *Egypt* and *Aethiopia*) and that merely out of Curiosity to see the man, and hear his wisdom, that was so renown'd.

THESE things could not naturally fail of bringing the knowledge of this people, with their Manners and Religion, to those countries :

WHAT the Success of this was, we are not told; but if by Strangers we are to understand Profelytes, we read of * vast multitudes in the beginning of *Solomon's* reign, no less than 153,600.

* 2 Chr.
ii. 7.

AND whatever may be suppos'd of the Conversion of the Queen of *Sheba*, and the King of *Tyre*, thus much we are sure of, that the former *Bless'd the Lord God of Israel*, the latter acknowledg'd Him to be the True God, by owning him to be *the Maker of Heaven, and Earth*.

THUS it was, as to Religion, in *Solomon's* Days.

AFTER His Death, we read of several things that would naturally contribute, and might, in reason, be suppos'd to be intended for carrying on the same design.

THE falling off, for instance, of the Ten tribes from the Kingdom of *Judah*, and the Erection of the Kingdom of *Israel*, could not fail to disperse the Knowledge of their Religion to *Egypt*, *Syria*, *Babylon*, and other Nations, with whom they were often engaged in War, and Alliances.

BUT that which was, above all other Methods, the most effectual for this, was, God's punishing His People with Captivity.

THE Ten Tribes were entirely carried away, and howsoever they were afterwards dispos'd of, they carried their Religion along with them.

AND as the other Two Tribes were 70 years in *Babylon*, dispersed over the Provinces of that Great Empire; so there were several very remarkable Incidents concurr'd to fix the Knowledge of their Religion there, and establish the Fear of that God they serv'd.

WE read of *Daniel's* Interpretation of *Nebuchadnezzar's* Dream, and of *Belshazzar's*

zar's *Mene Tekel*, and for this of his Promotion to be Ruler over the whole Province, Burnett. and Chief of the Governors of all the Wise Men of Babylon.

NOW, these things must naturally make a noise amongst them, and incite their Curiosity to inquire after that God, that could inspire him with so much Wisdom, above all the *Magicians, Astrologers, and Sorcerers* of the Country.

BUT his deliverance afterwards from the *Lions Den*, and that of *Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego*, from the *fiery Furnace*, were such glaring Instances of the Almighty Power of the God they serv'd, and trusted in, as could not but be universally taken notice of.

AND when these Deliverances were afterwards followed with Two publick Edicts on this account; not only confirming the Truth of the Facts, and acknowledging the Divine hand, by which they were done; but also that their God was the True God; One requiring that *none should dare to speak amiss of Him*; The other, that *all should fear, and tremble before Him*, what could be more effectual than this? Dan. iii. 29.

BUT that which still further'd this design, and made this people, and their religion still more known, was, the famous Edict issued out by *Cyrus*, which was afterwards confirm'd by *Darius*, and *Artaxerxes*, for the building of the City, and Temple of *Jerusalem*, with a Licence to the people to return thither. Ibid. vi. 26, 27.

AND as *Cyrus* is expressly said to be chosen by God, not only for the Restoration of His people, but that *all the world might know, from the rising of the Sun, and from the West, that he is the Lord, and none else*; So the reason given for their Restoration is the same, *That his Name might be known among all the heathen*. Isa. xlv. 6.

THUS was the God of *Israel* known in *Babylon* through the whole compass of that mighty Empire, by the means of the captive *Jews*; and this Knowledge must naturally disperse itself to all those places that held any Commerce with them, or had any kind of dependance on them. Ezek. xxxvi. 23. &c.

AND that this Knowledge they had got, might be afterwards preserved, when the *Jews* were gone away to their own land, it is worth your observation, that all would not return, but many still remain'd behind: As if it had been ordered so on purpose, that since the Seeds of Truth were now sown amongst them, some persons should be left to cherish, and improve them, that they might not be over-run with the weeds of Error, and Superstition, but nursed up into a plentiful Harvest.

I MIGHT add to this, the progress that it afterwards made under the *Grecian* Empire, when they were again dispers'd into foreign parts, and particularly into *Syria* and *Egypt*, where *Onias* built a Temple for the *Jews*, in imitation of that at *Jerusalem*; and *Ptolemy* procured a Translation of the Scriptures into *Greek* by the *LXX.* by the means of which their Religion became known not only to that, but afterwards to the whole *Roman* Empire.

AND many other things concurred to make it so; but my method confines me to the Old Testament History, which does not descend so low.

HOWEVER these Instances confirm to us, that God was not wanting in his Wise Providence to carry on this great design of propagating the Truth over all the World; and this was done with so great success, that we read afterwards in the New Testament, of *devout men*, met together at *Jerusalem*, at the Day of *Pentecost*, (by which was meant those, that fear'd the True God, the God of *Israel*) *out of every Nation* Acts ii. 5. *under Heaven*.

TO this we owe probably all the fine things that are so much magnified among the Heathen Philosophers, which though they are esteemed to be the fruits of bare Reason, we are not without grounds to think, they were only the gleanings they pick'd up in the several Countries through which they travell'd in search after Wisdom, and which they either receiv'd immediately from the *Jews* that they happen'd to find there, or from traditions they had left behind them, or from the Books of the Old Testament.

THE fabulous Inventions of the Heathen Poets are evidently built upon those Books, and the main of them are only the Scripture Stories in disguise.

AND 'tis from the Corruption of the Ideas derived from thence, that a great part of their Religion may be accounted for.

THE notion of the Supreme God, as *the Father both of Gods and Men*, as they express themselves, seems to have been taken from those expressions in Scripture, where the Angels and Princes are called *Gods*, and *the Sons of God*, whilst they are, at the same time, represented, as His Creatures:

AND their setting up *Dæmons*, and Heroes, and famous Men, as objects of their Worship,

Burnett. Worship, may very probably have arisen from the Corruption of the Tradition of a Promis'd Mediator, through whom God would be reconciled to Mankind, which prompted them to find out Mediators of their own, according to their vain Imaginations.

BUT as the Light of True Religion increas'd upon them, the vanity of these superstitions were, in time, seen thro' by the more thinking and inquisitive men; and though the faint Knowledge they had, was not sufficient of itself to correct the too popular Errors of those times, that were too strongly intrench'd by Power, and Interest, yet it brought the world into a proper disposition for that Reformation He intended for them.

FOR, as some men had in some measure attain'd to juster Notions of God, and discern'd the Folly of the Vulgar Idolatries, so all the world were in Expectation of the Saviour promis'd, and probably of that Reformation He was to bring with Him.

THE Heathen Historians speak of a Tradition that had prevailed over all the East, of some Person who was to come out of *Judea*, that should rule over all the world; which Tradition is said to be found in the ancient Books of the Priests; by which, it is more than probable, is meant the *Jewish* Books, the Holy Scriptures. See *Tacitus, cap. xiii. Suet. in Vesp. cap. iv.*

AND if *Virgil* can be supposed to refer to the same Tradition, and same Person, in his famous Eclogue to the Son of *Pollio*, as 'tis very reasonable to think he did, from the characters he describes Him by, exactly agreeable to the Old Testament; In this Eclogue he plainly shews us, what Notions they had of this Expected Prince; What a change he was to make upon the world, and what Happiness he was to bring along with Him.

FROM these general Hints, from the Heathen writers, we see how far the Knowledge of the True Religion had spread: We see how they were prepared for a better Scene of things, and look'd for the Person by whom it was to be effected: So that here was a great progress made.

TO bring the World to this, was the Great End, I have said, that the Divine Providence seems to have had in view in His various transactions, relating to the Children of *Israel*, and as this is the last thing, that, I have already shewn you, we might reasonably expect to find some account of in a History of this people, since the Scripture History answers in this respect, it is so far a Consistent, and Credible History.

AND now having run through my several heads, it will be here proper to look back a little, and take a short view of what I have done, that by seeing the design I had before me, and the method I have pursued it in, you may be better able to comprehend, and judge of the argument, and what is still behind to compleat the Whole.

A Recapitulation of what is past.

MY Design was, as you may remember, to prove the Credibility of the Scripture History from the Consistency of the matter contained in it, as being all but one continued thread of Facts founded in the Nature of things.

UNDER the notion of the Scripture History, I must be understood to take in the whole Book; and though some part of it consists of Prophecies, which are not properly Historical, yet as these Prophecies have a necessary relation to those Facts, which make up the History, and are represented, as means to carry on the end and design of the History, I consider them as Parts of it:

AND as the whole is visibly intended to give us an account of the various steps of the Divine Providence, in bringing Mankind to Happiness, after their first falling into sin; so my business was to shew you the Consistency, and Credibility of this account from its agreement with the natures, and reasons of things; that is to say, that the several methods of Providence related in this book, to have been made use of from time to time, were such as the nature, and reason of things required, and therefore, must reasonably be believed to have been, as they are said to have been, if Mankind may be supposed to have ever been in those circumstances, that called for them.

AND as the reason of all the various dispensations of Providence was Sin, and by consequence, a History of Providence must be a History of the Rise, and Progress of Sin.

AND as the End of Providence must be the Happiness of Mankind, and by consequence, a Rational History of Providence must give us an account of various methods taken, to make Mankind Happy, according as their different Circumstances required;

So in the Examination of the Scripture History, I began, as the Scripture does, *Burnett.* at the First sin, and from the nature of things endeavour'd to shew, how it must have happened, what it must have consisted in, what condition the First sinners were brought into by it, and what Providences were necessary to their Happiness, considering that condition they were fallen into, and how this History agrees in every respect :

AND as I shew'd the necessity of various Revelations at that time, and particularly of a Remedy for sin, and the Credibility of the account this History gives us of the Promise of a Redeemer, who should destroy the Works of the Devil ;

So I likewise shew'd, from the nature of this Promise, the necessity of various other Revelations, to foretel the Time when He should come, and the Characters by which He should be known at His coming.

AND as these things were not to be done at once, but were to be carried on by regular steps, according as the different circumstances of mankind required them, I went on to shew you what account this History gives us, of the Circumstances of Mankind from time to time, and what a suitable Provision was made for them.

AND as the End of Providence is, as I said before, the Happiness of Man, and the Happiness of Man consists in Holiness, and by consequence, all the methods of Providence must be order'd for the prevention of sin, and making them Holy ; so I shew'd you what means were made use of for this purpose, and the natural suitability of them :

I NEED not repeat the several particulars ; I shall pass over them all, 'till the calling of *Abraham*, which is the Hinge upon which the whole History depends : And the reason and end of it was this ;

GOD had done many things for the amendment of the world, which were sufficient to influence Rational Creatures, but they so far withstood them all, that they were all become universally Idolaters ; even the Posterity of *Shem* were corrupted with it, and the case was such, that they must be either left to the Power of the Devil, and given over to their own inventions, or some new means must be applied for their Reformation, and for the maintenance of God's Honour, and Authority amongst them :

FOR this purpose God calls out *Abraham*, from amongst his Idolatrous kindred, to be the Seed of a New, and Better Generation, as a Nursery for the preservation of True Religion, and Virtue :

AND in order to this, He took him and his Family under his own immediate conduct, and that He might keep them pure from the General contagion, he kept them, in a manner, separate from other People : They at first lived in a travelling way, as it were by themselves, and afterwards He settled them in *Aegypt*, and when they were grown into a sufficient Body, He led them out thence, and formed them into a Regular Commonwealth, under such Laws, as not only were calculated to make them a Holy people, but also to keep them separate from their Idolatrous Neighbours.

AND as they wanted assistance at any time, or according as they fell from their Obedience, He sent several Prophets to reveal His Will to them, either to give them Information of what they wanted to know, or to denounce vengeance on them for their Wickedness. And,

As the two great hinges of True Religion were the Knowledge of Him, the One True God, and Faith in the Redeemer that was to come, so in all His Dispen-sations towards them, He took care to preserve these Ideas in them :

THE former by the many amazing Instances of His Power, either in their Favour, or their Punishment, all which were intended to convince, and assure them that He, and He only, was the Lord.

THE latter, by sending His Prophets frequently to remind them of His Promise, and of such things as were necessary to be known, concerning the Redeemer, to keep their Hopes alive, 'till the Fullness of time should come, for His actual appearance.

AND when, by various means He had perfectly purified this people from Idolatry, and by various Revelations he had inform'd them of every thing necessary to be known, so that now there was no further need of Revelation, He then withdrew the Spirit of Prophecy from amongst them, and left them to improve the Notices they had.

BUT as all this was not intended barely for the benefit of this particular Nation ; but that True Religion being preserved pure, and undefiled amongst them, it might be thence communicated to all mankind, so I have shewn you what account this History gives us, of various methods of Providence for this purpose :

Burnett. AND when the world was so far actually enlightened by them, as to know Him, the One True God, and, in some measure, to see the vanity of the then establish'd superstitions, and a General Expectation was rais'd amongst them of a Great Prince, that was to come, who was to introduce a New, and Glorious Scene of Happiness over all mankind; here was the End of this dispensation accomplish'd: This was what this nation was rais'd up for, and this end being attained, there was now no longer need of their separation, nor of those Laws that were appointed to keep them separate. And therefore,

THIS seems in the nature of things to be a proper time for the appearance of the Promis'd Saviour: And whether He came, or not, and who He was, is the next thing to be inquired into.

C H A P. XVI.

That the Saviour Promis'd, is come.

THAT the time for the coming of the Promis'd Saviour appointed by the Prophets is expir'd, is certain, even by the consent of the *Jews* themselves.

The Scepter is long since departed from *Judah*, and there is not the least shadow of a Commonwealth amongst the *Jews* in any part of the world that we know of:

THE second Temple was destroyed near 1700 years ago, in which he was to have appeared, and 'twas about that time, that *Daniel's* weeks expired; and yet these were the rules to calculate His coming by.

AND now the Question is, Whether there was any Person appeared at that time, who answered the Prophetick Characters, and might reasonably be suppos'd to be the Person, they design'd:

THAT there were many Pretenders set up about that time appointed by the Prophets, I have already hinted to you: The Scriptures of the New Testament mention some; and other Books, inform us of several more; but withal they tell us, that they came to nought, and shew'd in the end, that they were, either only a parcel of poor deluded wretches themselves, or else designed to put an Imposture upon others.

C H A P. XVII.

That JESUS is the Saviour Promis'd.

THE only person that has been able to make his pretences good, that He was the Person the Prophets aim'd at, was *Jesus Christ*: And that He has done this to the conviction of every unprejudiced man, is our next business to prove.

AND in doing this, as I have before shewn the Connexion of the Scripture Prophecies concerning Him, so I will here shew the Connexion, and Correspondence there is between *Jesus Christ*, and those Prophecies. And that we may be able to make the comparison the more easily, I will run them over in the order I have before consider'd them.

The first Prediction of a Saviour fulfill'd.

To begin with the First Prediction to our First Parents, That *The Seed of the Woman should bruise the Serpent's Head*: This has a wonderful completion in *Jesus Christ*, if by this expression it was intended, that the Person meant by it should be the Seed of the Woman only, by being born of a Virgin-Mother:

As this was a Circumstance so very extraordinary, that we can hardly imagine any sensible Impostor would have laid such a Stumbling-block in the very entrance of his design, had it been a mere delusion; so we have reason to think it was intended in the Promise, from the natural relation it bears to those Laws about the trial of Virginity, that I have already taken notice of, of which no reasonable account can be given, but that they had an eye to the Birth of the Redeemer; so that when He should come as the Son of a Virgin, there might be some approv'd and authentick Proofs, by which such pretences might be legally determin'd.

AND as this Circumstance was so remarkably fulfill'd in *Jesus Christ*, who was conceiv'd in so Miraculous a manner, as to be *the Seed of the Woman* only; so it will hereafter appear, that He was that very Seed, which was promised in those Words, and which was *to bruise the Serpent's Head*.

BY *bruising the Serpent's Head*, I have already shewn, is meant His defeating the Devices of the Devil, by which he sought to bring Mankind to ruin, in the Delusion of our First Parents.

AND if this be the proper meaning of the words, for this end Jesus Christ is said *Burnett*. to have *appear'd*, that He might destroy the Works of the Devil, those works, in which he sinn'd from the beginning, 1 John iii. 8.

AND accordingly to effect this, As the design of the devil apparently was to deprive our First Parents of the favour of God, and that Happiness they were made for, by drawing them into Sin, and Death;

So this design is defeated by Jesus Christ, as He has reconcil'd Mankind to God, and procur'd pardon for their Sins; and as He has assur'd them of, and procur'd for them, a deliverance from Death, by a Resurrection to Everlasting Life, and Happiness.

HE has not only promis'd Pardon and Reconciliation, but he has taught us the true, and only rational and natural way to it, by Repentance; and as he laid down His Life in Confirmation of his Doctrine; so God was pleas'd to accept of his Death, as a Sacrifice of Expiation for us, to which, if we repent, we have liberty to appeal for pardon; And to assure us of His acceptance of this Sacrifice, God rais'd Him from the dead:

AND so again, He has not only promis'd a Resurrection to Everlasting Life, to all, that will make themselves capable of it; but He has given us His own Resurrection, as an Instance of the thing, to shew us the Possibility, and Certainty of the Event, that as he has rais'd up Himself from Death, so would He raise us up at the last day.

And lastly, HE has not only promis'd Happiness to us, but He hath taught us the true, and only natural and rational way to attain it, which is by Holiness.

AND as He has given us such Ideas of our Happiness, as are suitable to a Rational nature; so He has given us such rules of Holiness to attain it by, as are not only made the indispensable condition of it, but such as are, in the nature of things, the necessary qualification for it:

AND He has likewise not only given us such motives to inforce those rules, as are most proper to work upon a Rational Nature; but He has promis'd us such assistance, as is sufficient for us, to enable us to live accordingly.

AND whereas the Happiness He promises is in Heaven; to assure his Disciples, that there is such a place, He visibly, and in their presence, ascended thither:

AND as he told them beforehand, that He would go thither to prepare a Place for them there, and promis'd to endue them with Power from on High; so he afterwards gave them evidence of His being arriv'd there, by sending down those Gifts upon them from above, which he had before promis'd to endue them with; these Gifts being such, as could come only from above, and were abundant Proofs of a Divine Power.

AND as He has given us this assurance of a Resurrection to Life, and Happiness; so He teaches us, that this Happiness shall be compleat, and everlasting, a Happiness both of Body and Soul for ever, without any possibility of dying any more. Our Spirits shall be made Perfect, and our Bodies chang'd, *this Corruption having put on Incorruption, and this Mortal, Immortality.*

AND as He is now in Heaven at God's right hand, where all things are made subject to Him, and has taken possession of this Happiness in our name and behalf; so He has given us assurance, that He will one day come again to Judge the world in Righteousness: And as He will then actually confer this Happiness on all those for whom it is prepar'd; so he will execute vengeance upon his enemies, in a place of torments prepar'd for the Devil and his Angels.

THIS is a general view of the Christian Religion; and what is there wanting here to compleat this character of the Saviour promis'd, as He was to bruise the Serpent's head.

The second Prediction of a Saviour fulfill'd.

ANOTHER Promise we read of the Saviour to come, That He should be one in whom all Nations should be Bless'd.

THIS we have already shewn to be the same thing in other words, with what had been promis'd to our First Parents by *bruising the Serpent's head*, this being the greatest Blessing that God could bestow upon Mankind:

AND accordingly when St. Peter applies this Promise to Christ, he seems to intimate, that He was the Person intended by it, as He was sent to Bless us in turning every one of us away from our Iniquities.

FOR, as it was Sin that first brought misery into the world, and still continues it amongst us; so 'tis by our deliverance from this, that we must be made capable to Happiness, even in this world, as well as that which is to come. AND

Burnett. AND therefore as Jesus Christ came to be a Blessing to all Nations, He laid His foundation in their Reformation: He came to *save them from their Sins*:

AND as He came to a World that lay in Wickedness, the first Step He took was, *to teach them to deny all Ungodliness, and Worldly Lusts, and to live Soberly, Righteously, and Godlily in this present world.*

AND in order to this end, as He has done all, that is consistent with a Rational nature, on the one hand, by His Doctrine, His Precepts, His Promises, His Threatnings, His Life, His Death, His Resurrection, His Ascension, and Mission of the Holy Ghost *to abide with us, and work in us, both to Will, and to Do according to his good pleasure*;

So He has done all that is necessary to make us happy, not only in a future, but this present World:

HE has furnish'd our Understandings with Light, and Knowledge of all useful and necessary Truth, which Mankind either could not at all, or at least not so perfectly have discover'd, as was necessary to their Reformation, considering the sad bewilder'd State they were then fallen into:

HE has taught us how to regulate our Wills, and to reduce all our Irregular Appetites, and Passions, into Subjection to sober Reason:

AND the Laws He has given us to walk by are such, as are really for our advantage, consider'd either in our relative capacity, in the Peace, and Order, and Well-Government of Society; or in our Personal, in the Quiet of our Minds, the Health of our Bodies, the Security of our Liberty, Property, and Reputation, and the comfortable Enjoyment of all the valuable pleasures of the Animal, and Sensitive life:

AND that there might be nothing still wanting to compleat our welfare in this world, so far as we are capable of it, whereas we are all liable to many Evils, He has provided us with proper assistances and comforts under them, so as either totally to remove them, or take away the sting, and burthen of them.

THUS, for instance, As Mankind were continually involved in doubts about things of the greatest moment, which fill'd their minds with great disquietude, and made their lives restless, and uneasy, He has totally removed that Error, or Ignorance, which was the root from whence it sprung, and given us a view of all things necessary:

As we are perpetually liable to Wants, which naturally excite tormenting Cares, He has taught us how to moderate those Cares, by teaching us, that we have a *Father that takes care of us*, and that we ought therefore to *be careful for nothing*.

AND as we are expos'd to various and great Afflictions, which occasion great and pungent Sorrows, and are oft a grievous burden to our lives, he has taught us how to bear all these with Patience, by shewing us the Wisdom of the Hand, that lays them on, and the advantages that we shall certainly reap from them, if we are not wanting to our selves.

And lastly, As we are all certain one day to die, which of all things is most terrible to Humane Nature, especially when that day approaches towards us, He has furnish'd us with a sufficient remedy for this, by assuring us of a better Life, and that Death is but as the gate or passage thither.

AND now when we consider all this together, what is there still wanting to be done to make Himself a Blessing to all Nations, when He appears to have done all, that is necessary to their Happiness, consistent with their Rational nature, considering them, either as Rational, as Sinful, as Ignorant, Indigent, Afflicted, or Mortal Men?

The third Prediction of a Saviour fulfill'd.

ANOTHER Character given us of the Promis'd Saviour, was that of a *Prophet like unto Moses*; by which, I have already shewn, was meant, that He should not only be a Prophet to Reveal the Will of God, but a Redeemer, and a Lawgiver, a Mediator of a New Covenant, confirm'd by Miracles, as that of *Moses* had been:

AND that this Redemption should be a Spiritual Redemption; the Laws such as are written upon the Heart, and therefore Laws of Righteousness, and Holiness; and the Covenant not such a one, as *Moses's* was, but a better Covenant, a Covenant of Peace and Reconciliation between God and Man, and this calculated for the benefit of all the world.

THIS is all implied in this general Promise, as I have shewn, and is the Substance of all the Prophets.

AND what is there wanting in *Jesus Christ* of all this?

IT is evident, He has brought us a full, and perfect Revelation of the divine Will, which

which he receiv'd immediately from God, in such a manner, as no one beside Him ever *Burnett.* did. For the very Godhead dwelt in Him, and spake by Him: He had, as the Prophets foretold, *the Spirit of Wisdom, and Understanding, the Spirit of Counsel, and Might, the Spirit of Knowledge, and Fear of the Lord*, and this the New Testament says He receiv'd *without measure*.

He came as a Saviour, and Deliverer of God's people, as *Moses* was, but the Salvation He wrought for them was not a deliverance from bodily slavery, as that of the *Egyptians* was, under a Tyrannical *Pharaoh*; but it was, as I have shewn it ought to be, a deliverance of a higher Nature, from a worse bondage, more cruel enemies, and greater miseries: 'Twas such a deliverance, as the Prophet describ'd, by opening the Prison-doors of Darkness, and giving Light to the Blind, and Ignorant, and loosing them from the Chains and Captivity of sin: 'Twas, in a word, a deliverance from the power of Sin, and Satan, and the dominion of our lusts and passions, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

THIS was such a salvation as the world wanted; this was what He came into the world for; for this He had his Name; and this was His Work.

HE came as a Ruler, and a Lawgiver, as *Moses* was, but His Laws were of a higher, and nobler Nature, not such as consisted in burthensome Rites, and costly Ceremonies, in temporary, and occasional Institutions, which were given because of Transgression; but they were *Statutes which were good*, founded in Nature, and Reason, suitable to the Nature of God and Man, such as were worthy of God to give, and necessary to the Welfare of Man to observe.

HE came as a Mediator of a New Covenant, as *Moses* was, but such a Covenant as was of a better, and more perfect Nature, and built upon better promises, than his: A Covenant of Peace, and Reconciliation, such as the Prophets had foretold it should be, wherein God promises, *if we will take Him for our Father, we shall be to Him as Sons and Daughters; if we will be His People, He will be our God*.

AND if we have not done this in time past, if we will turn from *our Wickedness that we have committed*, and do that which is Lawful and Right, He will blot out our Iniquities, and remember them no more, and we shall save our Souls alive.

THIS is the Covenant describ'd in the Prophets, and this is evidently the nature of the Christian Covenant.

AND all this He confirm'd by Miracles, as *Moses* did; and that not only such Miracles, as the other Prophets had foretold should be done by Him; such as *opening the Eyes of the Blind*, and *the Ears of the Deaf*, *making the Lame to walk*, and *the Dumb to speak*; but His whole Ministry was one continued scene of Miracles, such as were works of Mercy, and Charity, done in his *Father's Name*, and with such force of Evidence, that they not only extorted Confession from the Multitude, that *He was a Teacher sent from God*, but that *He was that Prophet, that was to come into the world*.

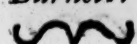
AND, Lastly, As we have before shewn, that the Promis'd Saviour was to be one, in whom all Nations should be Blessed, and therefore, all He was to be, or do, must be so order'd, as to be a Blessing to all the world; so was it here in *Jesus Christ*: the Revelation He deliver'd, the Salvation He wrought, the Laws He gave, and the Covenant He made, were such, as were not only intended for, but according as the Prophets had foretold they should be adapted to the condition of all Mankind.

THE Revelation was such, as all were equally concern'd in; the Salvation such, as all were equally capable of, and equally stood in need of; the Laws such, as all alike in every place were, and always will be obliged to; and the Covenant such, as actually includes all, and is offer'd to all, and is equally suited to the necessities of all.

THIS is the substance of what the Prophets foretold of the office, and business of the Promis'd Saviour, which is all completely answered by *Jesus Christ*: And as the benefit of all this was, you see, intended for All the world, so He took care to have it preach'd to All Nations. And as He chose out proper Persons for this Work, so He endued them with proper powers for it.

AND when they had preach'd the Gospel to all Nations as our Saviour had foretold, *that the End should come*, that is, the End of the *Jewish* Dispensation; and as God Himself had likewise told the *Jews*, that, when He should send them a Prophet like unto *Moses*, *if they did not hear*, and receive Him, *He would require it at their hands*; So 'tis very remarkable, that God then destroyed *Jerusalem*, the Temple, and the Government of the *Jews*, and has preserv'd them ever since, only as the *Gibeonites* formerly amongst the *Israelites*, as Witnesses that there was anciently such a people; as preservers of those Books, in which are delivered the Oracles of God, and as a standing Monument of the Vengeance of God, which he had before threatened, and they afterwards invok'd upon themselves, upon their rejection of the Lord of Life and Glory.

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*A Fourth Prediction of a Saviour fulfilled.*

BUT, *Fourthly*, As the Promis'd Saviour was to be a Prophet like unto *Moses*, so was He to be a King, like *David*, sitting upon his Throne for ever, having *the Heathen* for His inheritance, and the utmost parts of the Earth for His possession.

AND in this likewise *Jesus Christ* agrees. For what was to be here meant by the Throne and Kingdom of *David*? Not a Temporal Government certainly.

THE *Jews*, indeed, expected a Temporal Government, when all the world was to be brought into subjection to them: But this was a vain imagination, not consistent with the character of their *Messiah* in other respects:

HE was to be a Blessing to all Nations; but this was not a likely way to be so, to make them all Vassals to one people:

HE was to bruise the *Serpent's head*, to overcome the Devil, and to deliver Mankind from the consequences of his devices, Sin, Death, and Misery, into a State of Holiness, Happiness, and Immortality.

AND every thing, ascrib'd to Him, must agree with this: And in order to this, as there were various methods to be taken; as for instance, some things to be Taught, and Reveal'd from God, for which he usually made use of Prophets; and other things to be done in the way of Expiation, which belong'd to the Office of a Priest; so He is represented in Scripture, under these Characters.

AND as there were several other things to be done, in the way of Government, such as giving Laws, and executing Judgment, and the like, so on this account, He is represented as a King.

BUT then, as all this is only for the one Great end of bruising the *Serpent's head*, and bringing in Everlasting Righteousness, this Kingdom must be evidently a Spiritual Kingdom, as I have formerly shewn.

AND 'tis upon this account that 'tis call'd the *Kingdom of David*, and represented, by sitting upon His Throne.

FOR though the Kingdom of *David* was a Kingdom in this world, it was erected with a spiritual view: It was a Government set up for the protection of the Children of *Israel*, a people Chosen out of the rest of the world, as Holy to the Lord, and whom He kept separate from them for the preservation of the True Religion, in opposition to Idolatry, as I have all along shewn:

AND therefore, when 'tis promis'd that the *Messias* should sit upon *David's* Throne, it can be meant only, that he should rule over the *Israel* of God, His Elect, and Chosen people, and that as from His Kingdom all Idolatry should be banish'd, and the True God only Worshipp'd in it, so His Subjects should be a People Holy to the Lord.

AND, as all are not *Israel*, that are of *Israel*, but they only are the True *Israel*, the Chosen, and Elect of God, who serve Him faithfully in a sincere Obedience; so this Promise of the *Messiah's* Kingdom, seems plainly to imply, that there shall be a time, when all the World shall be of the same Religion, and all the people Holy to the Lord; when the Will of God shall be done, on Earth, as it is in Heaven; and then His Kingdom will be come; which is that Kingdom our Saviour seems to have taught us to pray for; *A Kingdom that shall, as the Prophet says, be possessed by the Saints, for ever and ever*, Dan. vii. 18.

IF this be the meaning of the Kingdom of the *Messiah*, it is yet to be fulfilled.

AND as the Kingdom of the Saints, which *Daniel* saw in Vision, was given to the Son of Man, when He came with the Clouds of Heaven before the Ancient of days, sitting in Judgment; So we may conceive there will be a time, when, as God will call the world to Judgment, so the Son of Man shall come in the Clouds of Heaven, and shall enter upon His Kingdom; that is, He shall be appointed the Judge of all, and then He shall reign over the Saints for ever, which agrees exactly with what we are taught to believe of *Jesus Christ*, that He is to be Judge of Quick and Dead, and then He will separate between the Righteous and the Wicked, and give the Kingdom to the Blessed of His Father, that was prepared for them from the beginning of the world; By which is plainly to be meant that Happiness which was promis'd at the beginning of the world, by the coming of the Seed of the Woman, in the possession of which they would enjoy the Blessing, which His Father had promis'd to all Nations through Him.

THIS is the full Completion of our Saviour's Kingdom and Glory:

BUT He has a Kingdom, even now, and that too over all the world, as the Promis'd Saviour was to have; and in this He was invested at His Ascension into Heaven, (whether He ascended in the Clouds of Heaven) God having then Highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name, or Authority, above every Name; all Power being given Him both

in Heaven and in Earth, Angels, Principalities, and Powers being made subject unto Him: Burnett.

AND as the Preaching the Gospel was an Introduction to this Authority, He was to be advanced to, and was an actual Promulgation of those Laws, which He required every one to pay Obedience to, that would be intitled to His Favour here, or the Glory of His Kingdom hereafter, so this is frequently called in the Gospel, *the Kingdom of Heaven*, as it is a beginning of that dispensation, which was to go on by degrees, 'till all Nations should become the Subjects of Christ, and enjoy the Privileges of the Gospel here, and such as would fit themselves for it, should be afterwards admitted into His Kingdom of Glory with all the Saints hereafter.

A Fifth Prediction of the Saviour fulfilled.

Fifthly, THE Promis'd Saviour was to be a Priest, the Prophet said, as well as a Prince upon the Throne, and as such, not only to make Reconciliation for sin; but also, as we are likewise told, to give His Soul, that is, His Life, an Offering for it, and to undergo great sufferings, *the Just for the Unjust*, that by his Stripes they might be healed.

AND what can more exactly agree than this, with Jesus Christ? who not only came into the world to seek, and to save, that which was lost, and underwent the greatest afflictions to bring us to God, but actually laid down His Life for our sakes, that we might have Redemption through His Blood:

AND as He did this by God's own appointment, God having prepared Him a Body for this purpose, and having performed the Will of God, He had, by consequence, paid the Price of our Redemption, which He had now a Right to: so He then *Ascended up into Heaven*, as the High Priest used to do at the Great Expiation, to present the Blood of His Sacrifice in the Holy Place.

AND by thus shewing Himself before God in that Body, in which He had suffered, and by that suffering had performed the Condition of our Reconciliation: As He did then by that Act intercede for us, and, as it were, claim that Redemption, He had by His suffering purchased, so, as He lives for ever at God's Right Hand, He ever lives to make the same Intercession for us, that He may save to the uttermost those, that come unto God by Him.

AND thus you see how He fulfill'd the Character of a Priest, whose Office is to go between God and the People in order for their Reconciliation to Him.

I MIGHT now proceed to the other things which I before observed to have been foretold of the Promis'd Saviour, relating to His Family, that He should be of the Seed of David; and the Place of His Birth, that it should be *Bethlehem*: as likewise that He should not only be Cut off for Sins of others, as has been just now taken notice of, but that He should Rise again, Ascend into Heaven, and send down Gifts among Men, that their Sons, and Daughters might Prophecy.

THESE are things which are usually understood upon very good reason to be foretold, and if so, I need not spend time in shewing how they agree to Jesus Christ: Every one that knows any thing of Christianity, must know that, if they are foretold, they have been literally fulfilled:

THAT His Family, the place of His Birth, and that He was to be cut off, but not for Himself, &c. were foretold, will not bear a reasonable dispute, and if the Prophecies of His Resurrection, Ascension, and Mission of the Holy Spirit be not so plain, as to satisfy some people they were foretold, then these Events must be considered in another view, not as a completion of former Predictions, but as Events that were necessary, in the nature of things, for the accomplishment of that design He came for; or else, as Testimonies to His Authority, that He was a Teacher sent from God, and as proofs of His being the Person, He pretended to be, and of the efficacy and acceptance of what He did, in order to the End He came for.

IN this view they do not fall under our present argument, which is only to shew our Saviour's agreement with the Scripture Prophecies;

BUT nevertheless, since there are several Texts in the Old Testament, that, beside the natural meaning of them, seem to be applied by our Saviour and His Apostles to His Resurrection, Ascension, and Mission of the Holy Ghost, and that not barely by way of Accommodation, but as Predictions, if the Facts be true, that Christ did Rise and Ascend into Heaven, and send the Holy Spirit, as related in the New Testament; they are, I think, a sufficient proof, that these Persons were Teachers sent from God, and that therefore they have rightly interpreted those Texts;

AND if so, they are a double Confirmation of Christianity, not only as they are in their own nature Miracles, but as they are a completion of former Prophecies.

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The Predictions of the Time of the Promis'd Saviour's coming fulfilled.

I COME now to consider the last thing relating to the coming of the Promised Saviour; which is, The Circumstance of Time, when this Great Event was to happen, and how *Jesus Christ* agreed in this respect:

And *First*, As it was foretold by the Prophet *Haggai*, chap. ii. 6, 7. that He should come, whilst the second Temple stood, at a time when all the world should be in expectation of Him, and after great changes, and commotions in the Great Kingdoms of the Earth; so we find all these agree to the coming of our Saviour Christ.

EVERY one that knows any thing of History, knows, that as the Great *Assyrian* Empire had, at the time of this Prophecy, been transferr'd to the *Medes*, and *Persians*, and not long after the *Persian* Empire was overturn'd by the Power of the *Greeks* under *Alexander*: So was this Empire, after *Alexander*, divided among his Chief Commanders; and afterwards, by degrees, was swallow'd up by the *Romans*.

AND when after various Wars, and Conquests, the whole Empire of the then known world was reduced under one Head, the then Ruling Emperor *Augustus*, and settled in a perfect Peace, and Tranquillity, then was *Jesus Christ*, the Prince of Peace, born, to bring the Tidings of Peace between God and Man.

HE was born while the second Temple stood, and frequently appeared and taught in it; and he came at a time, when, as the very Heathen Historians confirm, there was an Universal Expectation of Him:

So that nothing can more punctually agree than this.

But, *Secondly*, THE Time of the Promis'd Saviour's Coming was more particularly determin'd by the Prophet *Daniel*, to the Expiration of 70 Weeks after the going forth of a decree to build *Jerusalem*.

AND at this very time *Jesus Christ* appeared: The General Expectation of His coming at that very time, when He appeared, is a proof, that that generation understood the Prophecies on which they built their Expectation, were then to be fulfill'd, and that they had not been fulfill'd before: And 'tis very remarkable, that however the Calculation of this time be made, it wonderfully agrees to *Jesus Christ*, either as to His Birth, or Suffering, or the Destruction of *Jerusalem*.

Thirdly, WE have a further account of the time of the promis'd Saviour's Coming, in the Prophet *Malachi*, chap. iii. 1.—iv. 5. according to whom, He must not only come, as the Prophet *Haggai* had before said, during the second Temple, but He must have a *Messenger* come before Him, as an *Elias*, that is, one in the Power, and Spirit of *Elias*, to prepare His way, and then suddenly after He should appear. And,

How aptly does this concur with the Preaching of *John Baptist*? who, as he is reported, even by *Josephus*, to have been a person of so eminent Holiness, that he imputes the miseries that afterwards befell *Herod*, and his Family, to his unjust Murder of that good man; so he, that Good man, not only profess'd, that he came for that end the Prophet had foretold, namely, to prepare the Way of the Lord, and for this reason, preach'd Repentance to them for the remission of their Sins; but also expressly declared, That *Jesus* was the Person, The Lamb of God, that taketh away the Sins of the world.

And, *Lastly*, WAS all this to come to pass before the Sceptre should depart from *Judah*, and a Lawgiver from between his feet? Thus also it was fulfill'd in *Jesus Christ*.

FOR, at the time of his coming, all Authority and Power had not departed from *Judah*; they had still a Commonwealth remaining in that Tribe, and were govern'd by their own Laws, and the Kingdom had its name from *Judah*:

BUT soon after his coming, when the *Gentiles*, as *Jacob* had foretold they should do, had gathered themselves to Him by the preaching of the Apostles, then came the End of that dispensation; The whole *Jewish* Policy was overturn'd, the City and the Sanctuary destroy'd, and all tokens of Authority and Dominion totally erased; The People were dispers'd, their Tribes and Genealogies confounded, and the *Romans* took away both their place and nation.

AND as this was a strong Testimony to *Jesus Christ*; so is it also of the Wisdom of that Providence, by which it was effected, at that particular time.

FOR, as the *Jewish* Ceremonies had been Instituted by God, for the Cure and Prevention of the Idolatry of that people, who had been set up by God for the preservation of the True Religion, in the Knowledge and Service of the True God, in the Faith of the promis'd Saviour, for which he gave them several Injunctions to keep them separate from the Idolatrous world, and several Revelations from time to time to correct their Notions, and support their Faith:

AND as they were likewise intended, notwithstanding their Separation, to be a means of

of Communicating Light, and Knowledge to the rest of Mankind; so when the *Jews* *Burnett* were now no longer prone to Idolatry, and therefore there was no longer reason to continue them a separate people, nor any necessity of those Laws, which were given for that End:

AND when that Saviour was already come, the Expectation of whom they were to propagate, and when the Knowledge of the True Religion was actually imparted to all nations in its full perfection, by the preaching of the Apostles; There was then no need of continuing the *Jews* under a distinct dispensation, as before, because the reason of that dispensation was now ceas'd: And therefore God in Wisdom put an End to it; and that not only by the Destruction of the Temple, and the Confusion of their Tribes, and Genealogies, but even by dissolving their very nation, and scattering them over all the world: Intending, no doubt, that as He now design'd that they, and all Mankind, should be but one people, so it should not be in their power to keep themselves separate, and observe that dispensation any longer, by which they were obliged to meet and worship at *Jerusalem* only.

AND if so, it seems to be an argument of no little weight, that Jesus Christ was the Person, in whom that dispensation centred, when, so soon as He had finish'd what that dispensation requir'd, it was then abolish'd and destroy'd, according as it had been foretold it should be when *Shiloh* should come, and the people should be gathered to Him.

THUS you see, How the Prophecies agree to Jesus Christ, in respect of the Time, in which the Promis'd Saviour was to come.

THERE is one thing more, that I think proper to add in this place, and upon this head, relating to the Time of our Saviour's coming, which is, That He not only came at the Time appointed by the Prophets, but that it was, of all others, the most seasonable and suitable time that could possibly be imagin'd for it:

FOR we have before shewn, That by the means of the *Jews*, great Knowledge had been convey'd thro' the greatest part of the World: There were some among the Heathens, who had gain'd so much light, as in some measure to discern the Vanity of the Vulgar Superstitions, tho' they knew not what to substitute in their room: And many of them had reform'd their notions of God in some respects; and as they liv'd in the Expectation of some great change, so they were in some degrees prepar'd for it, by the previous light they had receiv'd.

WE may likewise observe, that Learning was then arriv'd at its utmost perfection, in so much that that Age was the Standard of all after-times, and as this qualified them to understand and examine Truth, and was a great preservative from Error and Imposture; so there was a noble Spirit of Curiosity reigning amongst them, that prompted them to inquire after Truth, and vast numbers of men of a Free, and Inquisitive Genius, that employ'd themselves in New Discoveries; and tho' this probably arose only from Vanity, and Ostentation, yet it was a proper disposition for the opening of Christianity to them, and might procure it, at least, a favourable Hearing.

THERE was likewise a general Peace throughout the world, and all the known parts of it were then reduced under one Head, under Subjection to the *Roman* Empire; and as there was, by this means, an easy and safe passage open'd for commerce from one Kingdom and Nation to another, so there could be no time more seasonable for the opening the Gospel, which was to be preach'd to all Nations, than this.

BUT that consideration which is of greatest weight in this matter, and most worthy your notice, is, That there was an absolute necessity of a Revelation, both to *Jew*, and *Gentile*, at that time, and that therefore He came in the most proper season, as He was then needed most.

THE necessity of a New Revelation to the *Gentiles*, at that time when our Saviour came, has been already prov'd in my former discourses; And there can be as little doubt of the same, in respect of the *Jews*, if we consider the Condition they were then fallen into.

'Tis evident, that notwithstanding all the methods God had taken for the establishment of True Religion and Virtue amongst them, they still needed a Reformation in Both respects.

THO' they preserv'd the true Ideas of God in general, yet His Worship and Service was reduced to a mere Formality: Those Ceremonies, which had been appointed only for a time, and as means of keeping them a Separate people, lest they should be infected by the contagion of an Idolatrous world, were then the whole of the Religion, as if the observance of those external Rites would alone be sufficient to procure them the favour and acceptance of God:

THE *New Testament* tells us, which we consider only, as an Ancient History, that their Law had been so corrupted by the false Glosses of the Scribes and Pharisees, that they render'd it in a manner void, and useless: And they made so many additions to it by

Burnett. their traditions, *teaching for Doctrines the commandments of Men*, that it became a grievous and burthensome Yoke, which neither they nor their Fathers could bear.

WE have several Hints in the new Testament of some notions they received intirely destructive of the whole Moral Law.

JOHN Baptist seems to intimate, that they thought their being the Children of Abraham alone would be sufficient for their purpose, without *Works meet for Repentance*, Mat. iii.

AND in another place, by a Question proposed to our Saviour, *Which was the Great Commandment of the Law?* they are generally understood to have thought, that the punctual observance of some one more remarkable duty, (such as Circumcision, the Sabbath, the Payment of Tythes, or the offering of Sacrifices) would exempt them from their Obedience to all the rest.

THESE were such opinions as would be easily receiv'd, and were of dangerous consequence to Religion, and Morality.

AND with this, there was then a modern, but prevailing sect amongst them, that not only rejected a great part of the holy Writings, but maintained, that there was *no Resurrection, nor Angel, nor Spirit*.

WHETHER they meant by this, that there was no separate state of Spirits, and as they believed no Resurrection, nothing could be expected beyond the Grave, I am not sufficiently informed:

HOWEVER that be, there does not seem to have been at that time a sufficient Revelation of a future State.

THE Belief of another Life is always necessary to the practice of Virtue, and without a thorough sense of it, considering the corruption of Mankind, 'tis a great hazard, but Immorality must universally prevail; and therefore 'tis always necessary, that this point should be firmly settled; but it was more particularly so to the *Jews* at that time.

'TIS very certain their Law chiefly promised them temporal Privileges, and little is said in it from first to last, relating to another life, but what was to be gathered from Implications:

AND as present things are too apt to gain upon us, and make us careless of future hopes, even though never so clearly revealed, and firmly grounded, so they would be much more likely to do so in their case, under only imperfect Hints.

'TIS true, indeed, I have already shewn, that the Certainty of a future Resurrection to a state of Immortal Happiness had been clearly intimated in the first Promise of the *Seed, that should bruise the Serpent's head*.

BUT this was to be discover'd only by rational deduction, and tho' it might be clear enough to thinking men, yet the way that this notion was ordinarily carried on, so far as it was believ'd among the Multitude, was probably by Tradition:

AND as Tradition is usually too weak to struggle against the afflictions, and temptations of a wicked world, so, according to the accounts we have of that people, they seem to have been wholly taken up with the Interests and Concerns of this present life:

AND thence it was, that we read, when they labour'd under great Calamities, how they murmur'd against God, as if they had serv'd Him *in vain*; and all their hopes had been defeated by those calamities.

'TIS true, indeed the Principle of a Resurrection is said in the New Testament to have been believed by the Pharisees; but upon what foundation we are not told: And we find they had very gross notions of it, whilst they are said by *Josephus* to speak of another life, as the Heathens did.

AND if so, 'tis no wonder it had no better effect upon their lives: For the same *Josephus* tells us, the whole nation were become so profligately Wicked, and so abandon'd to Vice, that at the time of their destruction, if the *Romans* had not come against them, the earth must have swallowed them up, or fire from heaven consumed them.

THESE things being thus, this plainly shews us, how ineffectual all former methods had proved, and how necessary a New Revelation was at that time for the Reformation both of their Notions, and their Manners: And particularly to give them a better and more full Idea of another life, built upon a better bottom,

AND since the Promis'd Saviour was to come at this time, and to bring a New Covenant with Him, as it shews us the particular wisdom of God, in sending such a Covenant at such a time, when the people stood most in need of it, so it teaches us what to expect in this New Covenant, *viz.* that it provide for all these necessities:

AND, since *Jesus Christ* not only came at this time, but came with a New Covenant to them, and such a one, as, every one knows, that reads the New Testament, was, in all respects, suitable to their Circumstances; a Covenant, wherein their errors, and false notions were corrected, their abuses of their Law condemned, and the defects of it fill'd up; a Covenant

Antiq.
lib. 18.
cap. 2.

De bello.
6. 16.

venant *bringing in better hopes, and establish'd upon better promises*, and wherein every thing necessary was provided for their Reformation, and the bringing them to eternal Happiness; What stronger proof can we have, that He was the very Person the Jews expected, that God had promis'd, and the Prophets had foretold should come?

AND when He had actually made an offer of this Covenant to the Jews, and was rejected by them, and there was then no possible Hopes of their Reformation, this gives us another reason for the destruction of that Nation: As being a people unworthy of the continuance of God's Favour to them, as being Vessels fitted only for destruction, having shewn themselves incapable of being wrought upon; and therefore it was but just that He should require it at their hands, as He had before threatened He would do, if they would not hear the Prophet that He should send to them.

AND thus you see how all things agree in *Jesus Christ*, in every Circumstance foretold.

AND as the completion of them in Him, is a full confirmation of our foregoing Interpretation of them, so this will likewise give us a Key, by which to explain several other places, which would not otherwise so well be understood.

FOR if it be true, as we have shewn, that there are real Prophecies of a Saviour to come, which have been literally fulfilled in *Jesus Christ*; from hence we may infer, as we have before done in another case;

THAT whatever is told us of *Jesus Christ* in the New Testament, that has a natural relation to what we read in the Old, we have reason to think, that relation might be intended, and may reasonably interpret one by the other:

THUS, for instance, when we see a manifest Resemblance between *the Serpent lifted up in the Wilderness*; *the Scape-Goat*; *the Paschal Lamb*; and *the High Priest's going into the Holy of Holies once a year to present the blood of the Atonement before the Lord*; And *our Saviour's being lifted up upon the Cross, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish*; *His bearing our sins in His own Body*; *His dying for us, that thro' His Blood we might be delivered from the vengeance of God*; and after that, of *His going up to Heaven, with His own Blood, to appear in the presence of God for us*: When, I say, we see such a resemblance as this, is it not reasonable to think, that these Institutions under the Law, might be design'd, as Types of those several things, that are so manifestly represented by them in the Gospel?

And so, Secondly, WHEN we read in this History, of *Jesus Christ*, that He was born of a Virgin, and are from thence sure, that God always intended, and decreed it should be so; When we find the Promise of *Isaiab*, quoted by the Evangelist, as fulfilled in Him, where 'tis said, *A Virgin shall conceive, and bring forth a Son, and shall call his name Emmanuel*, is it not reasonable to conceive, that this Prophecy might relate to him, and be spoken of Him, tho' the Prophet himself might not probably know it? especially when the Characters there mentioned of the Person to be born could belong to no other Person but Him, being described not only by such illustrious titles, as *Emmanuel*, *Wonderful*, *the Counsellor*, *the Father of the age*, *the Prince of Peace*, but also as one, who should sit on the throne of David for ever, which is an apparent character of that King, who was to come of the Root of Jesse, whom we have already shewn to be the *Messiah*.

AND therefore, tho' we could not so clearly make it out, as we think we are able to do, that this was a real Prophecy of Him, from the circumstances of the Place, and Story, yet when we know so little of the Prophetick language, and see the literal sense of that Prophecy agreeing exactly with the Event, and that too so strange an Event as this was, 'tis not unreasonable to think, that this Expression of the Prophet is not barely applied to Christ by way of accommodation only, but as it was originally spoken of Him.

AND so again, Thirdly, WHEN we read the History of our Saviour's Death, and the several Circumstances of it, That He was mocked, and laughed to scorn, that they pierced His hands, and His feet, and stood staring, and looking upon Him; that they parted His garments, and cast lots for them, and when He was upon the Cross, cried out with scorn, He trusted in God, let Him deliver Him; and at last, before His giving up the Ghost, that He Himself cried out, with a loud voice, saying, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!*

AND when, after this, we read in the *xxiij Psalm*, the very same things spoken of there, tho' they seem to be spoken by David of Himself, yet, as they do not appear to have been fulfilled in Him, and therefore cannot properly belong to Him; so considering David as a Prophet, it is not unreasonable to think he might have spoken them with a Prophetick view of some other Person, and since they all concur in *Jesus Christ*, and are actually fulfilled in Him, it is natural to conceive they were spoken of Him.

THUS we may conclude of a vast multitude of Texts, which will open a great part of the Scripture to us;

BUT such Interpretations, however reasonable, are of use only to ourselves: They may enlarge our own Ideas, and strengthen our Faith, but no argument can be drawn from them for the conviction of others.

THE

Burne THE Prophecies therefore that I have here made use of, have not been of this nature; but such only as are plain and intelligible to every impartial reader; and I think there is nothing wanting, beyond what I have urg'd, to shew that they agree in *Jesus Christ*; which was the thing to be demonstrated.

The CONCLUSION.

THUS have I finish'd what I first propos'd which was, To shew the Truth of the Christian Religion from the relation that it bears to the History of the Old Testament, the Credibility of which, I was to shew from the consistency of the several parts of it, with the natures, and reasons of things.

AND for this purpose, as I have examined it Step by Step, and consider'd what the design of it was, and demonstrated the necessity of various Prophecies, and Revelations, to support that design, which this History gives us a suitable account of; So I have shewn likewise such a consistency between those Prophecies, and Revelations, and that design they were intended for, that they all appear to be but one continued thread, tho' delivered by different Persons, and several of them in different, and distant ages:

AND as the whole History, both in the design, and the Prophecies of it, had a manifest relation to one Event, without the accomplishment of which it could neither be perfect nor true; So I have shewn you, how every thing delivered in the Old Testament, had its full completion in the New.

THE Relation between them is so manifest, and the Correspondence so exact, that the Whole is but one intire Scheme, like an Edifice, built by degrees:

THE design of it was first drawn by God Himself, and the Foundation laid in a Covenant He made with our First Parents; a Covenant of Reconciliation thro' the Promised Seed, in the Faith of whom they should be accepted by Him.

WHAT was thus begun, and for some time continued immediately by God Himself, was afterwards carried on by the mediation of His Servants, the Prophets, and then finish'd by *Jesus Christ*, and His Apostles:

I HAVE shewn you, how the Structure, as we have it now compleated, corresponds to the Design, and Foundation originally laid, in which there is such an intire Agreement, that the Old Testament, and the New are but the same thing:

THE same Religion, the same Doctrine of Salvation is set forth in Both: Only in the former it is like a Man in His Infancy, and Childhood, and in the latter, as in his full age, and perfection:

So that if we believe the History of the Old Testament, the Christian must be the True Religion; which was the thing to be demonstrated.

AND thus have I finish'd my argument; but before I put an End to this discourse, I have one thing more to observe to you, and it is this: That in all this long train of Reasoning, as I have considered the Scripture only as a History, and the Prophecies only as Facts, which are parts of it, so I have deduced the Truth of the Christian Religion only, from its consistency with, and its necessary relation to those Facts:

I HAVE taken no notice of the Evidence of Prophecy in itself, as it is in its own nature a Divine Revelation, and by consequence, whatever is so Revealed by the Prophets must be true, as having a Divine Testimony to it:

AND yet we see Christianity is the result of many Prophecies, and that not barely as a thing that should come to pass, but as a design laid and carried on by God Himself, and which He intended should come to pass, and therefore must be a Divine Revelation.

AND if to this we add, That Christianity is not only a design carried on by God Himself, in a Series of Prophecies evidently fulfilled in Christ, but that the Ideas delivered in those Prophecies concerning Him, are such as could not be fulfilled, without the concurrence of a Divine Power, such as His doing Miracles, His Resurrection, Ascension, and Mission of the Holy Spirit; these things carry a double Testimony along with them, not only as a Completion of former Prophecies, but such a Completion, as must have been effected by God:

AND by consequence, that Christianity was not only a design laid, and carried on by God Himself, but was actually finish'd by His own Hand, and was, from first to last, His own Work.

AND now what is the proper Inference from hence, but that as we have such evident proof for our Religion, we should *take heed, lest there be in any of us an evil heart of Unbelief?* But, on the contrary, that we thankfully rejoice in the Happiness we enjoy above other people, in being admitted to the excellency of Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ*, and endeavour to shew the esteem we have of it, in walking worthy of the Lord, unto all well-pleasing, and giving all diligence to make our Calling, and Election sure, by being fruitful in every good work, that so an Entrance may be administered unto us, into His Kingdom and Glory.

F I N I S.

THE
GRADUAL REVELATION
OF THE
G O S P E L;
From the Time of
MAN'S APOSTACY.

Set forth and Explained in
Twenty four SERMONS,
PREACHED
In the Parish-Church of *St. Mary le Bow*,
AT THE LECTURE FOUNDED BY
The Honourable *Robert Boyle*, Esq;
In the YEARS 1730, 1731, and 1732.

BY
WILLIAM BERRIMAN, D.D.
Rector of *St. Andrew's Undershaft*, and Fellow of *Eton College*.

The Doctrine of the Religion

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TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

Richard Earl of Burlington,

And the Right Reverend Father in GOD

Edmund Lord Bishop of London,

TRUSTEES Nominated by

THE MOST REVEREND FATHER IN GOD

T H O M A S,

Late Lord Archbishop of *Canterbury*;

The last surviving TRUSTEE Named by

The Honourable *ROBERT BOYLE* Esq;

These SERMONS, Preached at their Appointment, are
most humbly Dedicated, by

Their LORDSHIPS

Most Obedient, and

Most Humble Servant,

WILLIAM BERRIMAN.

T H E
P R E F A C E.

Berriman.

THE bold and insolent Attacks, that have been lately made upon the Christian Religion, have had this good Effect, to engage many able Champions in Defence of it, and add thereby to its Grace and Perspicuity. Their Labours might reasonably have excused my Silence, if I had not been called upon, in this publick Manner, to add something in behalf of our common Christianity.

At the Time when I had first Notice to prepare for these Lectures, the most noted Books on the Infidel Side were, The Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion, and The Scheme of Literal Prophecy considered. As the Author of these Pieces aim'd to destroy and ridicule the Christian Interpretation of the ancient Scriptures, this naturally turned my Thoughts to state the Evidences of our Religion from the Old Testament; which, I thought, could not be done to more Advantage, than by shewing, in the Method I have taken, that there has been one uniform View of Reveal'd Religion kept up through all Ages and Periods of Time; and this involv'd in greater Obscurity, whilst the Facts to which it related were at greater Distance, but gradually unfolded and explained as the Time drew on for the Accomplishment.

But whilst my Thoughts were engaged in this Defence against the open Preparations of our Enemies; the Patrons of Infidelity have thought fit to change the Field of Battle, and attack us from another Quarter. The Author of Christianity as Old as the Creation, instead of comparing the New Testament with the Old, and opposing our Religion with Jewish Reasonings, chuses rather to disown the need of either, by setting up the Light of every Man's own Mind, as a perfect and sufficient Guide in all religious Enquiries, and acknowledging no other Use of Revelation, but where it teaches the same Principles which might be known without it. This is but striking in with the Delusions of the Old Deceiver*, and flattering Mankind with the Opinion of Divine Knowledge, for a perfect Distinction between Good and Evil.

* Gen. iii.
5.

As I had taken some Care beforehand to obviate this Notion in the two first of these Discourses, so the particular Sophistry of this Author has since been detected by such able Hands, as makes it needless for me to lengthen out this Preface, by entering upon that Province. But the Reader will forgive me, if I take this Opportunity to express my Concern and Amazement, that one who pretends to be^a a true Friend to Christianity, a sincere and earnest Christian^b, should at this Time of Day, throw out his Contempt and Satyr upon those who are labouring in Defence of our Religion, and in answering the Cavils and Sophistry of Infidels; that he should do this, not only by indecent Reflections on the Clergy and other serious Writers, as Persons of a narrow Circle of Life and Studies^c, taking up with the crude and senseless Cant of Bigots, the Common-place stuff of Declamatory Preachers^d, as a Set of rash dogmatical Divines, whose Minds, prepossess'd with Systems, and darkned with Prejudices, could never see through the Mists their Nurses and Mothers had spread about their Eyes^e; whilst himself, and such as he, are extoll'd for^f Men of Sense, Learning, and Understanding, Rational

^a Defence of the Letter to Dr. Waterland, p. 4.

^b Remarks on the Reply to the Defence, p. 69.

^c Remarks, p. 69. ^d Letter to Dr. Waterland, p. 5.

^e Defence, p. 5.

^f Letter, p. 5, 28, 38, 40, 45, 48.

Defence, p. 1, 5, 19, 34.

Rational Men, who have practised the World, and used the Conversation of Men of Letters; but even by giving up the Honour of the Scriptures themselves^a, and particularly the Writings of Moses, who is set upon the Foot of human Law-givers and political Historians, making both his Laws and History conformable to the Superstition he had learn'd in Egypt, the plain Effects of his Egyptian Learning^b.

The Author, indeed, pretends it to be far from him to think or say^c, that the Divine Origin of the Law and Inspiration of Moses, is to be resolved into Fiction or Fable, or Political Lying. But this (he adds) perhaps one may venture to say, That the Supposition of some Degree of such Fiction, may possibly be found necessary to the solving the Difficulties of the Mosaic Writings: And this presently after he had quoted Eusebius as saying, That in the Books of Moses there are infinite Examples of this kind of Fictions. That Passage of Eusebius has been considered by another Hand^d, who well observes also, with Reference to this Author, that by pleading thus for the Allowance of some Degree of Fiction, and including infinite Examples under that Degree, and at the same Time not caring to let us know what Part, in his Opinion, is free from Fiction; he gives too much Reason for suspecting that his Sentiments on this Head are such as he cannot decently own. This was a fair Challenge to explain himself fully on that Head: And yet in his last Thoughts upon this Subject, he continues to conceal himself in the same Obscurity, and thinks it Excuse enough that he has put in these cautionary Terms^e, perhaps; may venture; some Degree; may possibly be found. But can any Man desire to be thought a sincere Christian, and forbear such an Occasion to declare himself more fully and explicitly?

He does afterwards, indeed, profess a general Belief of the Divine Origin and Inspiration of the Books of the Old and New Testament^f; — and as to the particular Character and Case of Moses, he takes him to have been a great Prophet and Law-giver, who in an extraordinary and miraculous Manner, was favour'd, assisted, and inspired by God, in the Institution of his Laws and Religion, and consequently had a Divine Authority, which is frequently appealed to and confirm'd in the New Testament.

But why is his Inspiration confined to the Institution of his Laws and Religion? Was he not also assisted and inspired in the Writing of his History? This the Prophets always supposed; This the New Testament confirms; This the Church in all Ages has stedfastly believed. Nor can we maintain his Inspiration as a Law-giver, without asserting it first as an Historian, since it is upon the Credit of his History, that the Divine Authority of his Laws must be established. I should not perhaps have made this Remark, if our Author had not, by ridiculing the Literal History of the Fall^g, by objecting Difficulties to the Scriptural Account of the Confusion of Languages^h, and of the Origin of Circumcisionⁱ, given too much Reason to suspect, that it is not by Accident, but with Design, that he forbears to acknowledge the Author of the Pentateuch inspired as an Historian. And even as a Law-giver, or Institutor of Religion, it must be difficult to guess what he means by Inspiration, since he resolves the Original of many Jewish Rites into Moses's Egyptian Learning^j, although the Scripture clearly refers them to the Command of God; and profanely scoffs at the Supposition of his being taught by God to make a Candlestick^k, although the Text is express, that God shewed him the Pattern of it in the Mount, and that Bezaleel was filled with the Spirit of God, to do this as well as other Works of the Sanctuary. And though he would cover this Impiety under the Pretence of its being Josephus's Opinion, that the Theocracy was the Contrivance of Moses, yet he plainly mentions it with Approbation, and owns it for his own Meaning, not to acknowledge, that Moses was constantly and uniformly inspired by God, either in what he instituted, or what he has related^l. Nay, immediately after the Declaration above-mentioned, he subjoins such a Limitation, as is plainly calculated to lessen our Esteem, not only of the Inspiration of Moses, but

Exod.
xxv. 40.
Exod.
xxx. 3.

VOL. III.

(7 K)

^a Letter, p. 44, 45.

^b Reply to Defence, p. 64.

^c Letter, p. 38, 39, 40.

32, 33. — Defence, p. 20

^d Letter, p. 23, 28, 33. Defence, p. 25, 26, 33, 34, &c.

^e Remarks, p. 52.

^f Remarks, p. 69.

^g Letter, p. 13, 22, 24.

^h Letter, p. 26, 30, 31, 32, 33. — Defence, p. 20.

ⁱ Letter, p. 31.

^j Defence, p. 38. ^k Remarks, p. 75, 76.

^l Defence, p. 45.

Berriman. but of the New Testament itself: When he pronounces it necessary withal^t, to allow some Exception to the general Rule, [concerning the Inspiration of Scripture,] without explaining what that Exception is, or how far it extends. This leaves him a Loop-Hole for all that Fiction and Political Lying, which he had before supposed, and has not yet retracted.

It is then an unreasonable Air of Satisfaction which he gives himself, when he professes here^v to fix his Foot; and takes upon him to assert, that we are under no Obligation of Reason or Religion to believe, that the Scriptures are of absolute and universal Inspiration; or that every Passage in them was dictated by a Divine Spirit: and accordingly makes this to be the last of the four^w Questions, upon which the Dispute between him and his Adversary stands. Who sees not that here is an artful Shifting of the Point in debate? which plainly is not concerning the Degree of Inspiration, which may be differently explain'd so long as nothing false or fictitious is admitted; but whether Moses made use of any Degree of Fiction or Political Lying, in his Writings, and particularly in his Laws. If this should be allow'd, we know not where to stop: But what Moses delivers in the Name and Authority of God, might be most of it, notwithstanding, a meer Invention and Contrivance of his own. It can avail but little to acknowledge his Inspiration in three Lines, when it is made the Purport of three Pamphlets to weaken and destroy it: Especially since it is acknowledged of him as a Law-giver only, and not as an Historian; nay, and even that Acknowledgment is so limited and caution'd that there can be nothing built upon it, as we saw before. He strives in vain to shelter himself under the Authority of Sir John Marsham, Dr. Spencer, and others^x, who have asserted that many of the Hebrew Rites were taken from the Egyptians; as if in saying this they had agreed with him to ascribe them to Moses's Learning and Insight in Egyptian Affairs, and so to human Invention and Original. That there was a Similitude between the Hebrew and Egyptian Rites, is not to be disputed. And it has been reasonably blamed in those learned Men, that they seem fond of ascribing the original Use to the Egyptians, when it might with better Reason be supposed, either that they took them from the Hebrews, who had lived among them, and whom (after Moses's Time at least) they had no Grounds to despise, (as this Author^y imagines) but rather to behold with Reverence and Admiration: Or else, that both Nations received and practis'd them in Imitation of more antient Times, as the Remains of that Religion profess'd among the Patriarchs, which had been greatly corrupted in Egypt by the Mixture of many Superstitions, but was now restored in Purity in Israel. But whatever be determined upon that Question, 'tis certain our Author has no Claim to the Patronage of these learned Men, since they do not ascribe any Degree of Fiction to Moses; and Dr. Spencer in particular is very express in ascribing the Authority of all his Laws to God, by whose Commission he delivered them, and whose act Dr. Spencer represents it to have been, to indulge the People in the Continuance of such Rites to which they had been accustomed, and apply them withal to a new and better Significancy.

The Integrity of the Mosaic Writings has been asserted and defended by very able Hands; and upon that Foot we contend for the Truth of his Narrations, and consequently for the Divine Original and Authority of his Laws. What this Writer objects from Josephus and other Authors, has been so fully considered by those who have Replied to him, that as I have no Disposition at this Time, so I have no Occasion to interpose in the Dispute. But because in his last Efforts (to which no Reply has been made) he aims at some Proof of his Opinion from the Scripture itself, it may concern me in few Words to examine what he offers upon that Head.

And here he roundly tells us, ^z that he found it to no Purpose to lay much Stress on those Texts that are usually alledged on the Occasion; since by admitting a Latitude and Variety of Interpretation, they furnish nothing decisive, but leave room still for fresh and endless Squabbles. With this contemptu-

^t Remarks, p. 69, 70.

^v fence, p. 25.

^w Ibid.

^x Remarks, p. 79.

^y Letter, p. 29, 30.

^z Remarks, p. 74.

^a Letter to Dr. Waterland, p. 25, 27, 33.

ous, supercilious Air, all those Texts which assert the Inspiration and Divine *Berriman.* Authority of the Scriptures, and of the Mosaic Writings in particular, are laid aside at once as useless and not decisive. But if he had thought fit to make the Experiment, he would have found it difficult to point out any such Latitude or Variety of Interpretation, as admits of any Degree of Fiction, or Political Lying; any Thing calculated to deceive the People, although it were in order to their Benefit. But since he is pleased to wave all this kind of Proof, and pass it by in Silence, it stands in all that Force of Argument for the Divine Authority of the Books of Moses, and the other Scriptures, which every candid Reader will observe, without any additional Arts to illustrate and adorn it.

We must, however, be content to follow our Author in his own Way^a, who chuses, it seems, to argue from Matters of Fact, and to attend to the plain Sense and Language of those Facts, when stripp'd of the Glosses and forced Interpretations which Commentators would fasten on them, in favour of their Systems and Prejudices. Well then, let this be agreed on as the Test between us: And what Facts has our Author produced, to shew that Moses made use of any Degree of Fiction, or Political Lying? That he may not lose all his Artillery at once, he gives but one Instance as a Specimen, which he thinks will do the Business: And that is in the Case of Jethro^b, who observing, and reflecting on the Fatigue and Trouble which Moses's Method of Judging the People alone must occasion both to himself and the People, took the Liberty to represent to him the Inconveniencies of this Method, and advised him to chuse out a Number of able and honest Men, to be set over the People, as their Judges and Rulers in all ordinary Cases; Rulers over Thousands, over Hundreds, over Fifties, over Tens; reserving to himself the Cognizance only of greater Causes. Upon which Moses, as we read, hearkened to the Voice of his Father-in-law, and did all that he had said. And from what is related afterwards of the same Fact, we learn, that Moses had the solemn Consent and Approbation of the People, before he put it in Execution. *Exod. xviii. 24. Deut. i. 13.*

Thus he states the Fact: We are next to look to his Inference. Now the Inference (*says he*) I draw from this is, That it appears very clearly from this plain Fact, that Moses, in the Case of an Institution of great Importance to the whole Body of his People, and to the good Order and Government of the Community, had not the Assistance of any Divine Inspiration, but derived the whole Thought and Design of it from the Advice and Counsel of a wise and prudent Man, of whom all that we know is, that he was Priest of Midian. If then there was no Inspiration in the Thing itself, there could be no occasion for any in the Narration of it; and consequently Moses was not constantly and uniformly inspired by God, either in what he instituted, or in what he has related. So then it seems here are two Points inferred; First, that Moses was not inspired in the Matter of the Institution; nor, Secondly, in the Historical Account of it. But neither of these was the Point to be inferred: The single Point to be proved was, That Moses made use of some Degree of Fiction, or Political Lying. But can that be collected from this Affair of Jethro? Is there any Ground to suspect that the Relation of Moses is not true in Fact? Our Author does not pretend it, but artfully conceals or shifts the Question, and brings another Point in view.

In the next Place, there is no Consequence from one of his Inferences to the other. If there was no Inspiration in the Matter of the Institution, this will not prove that there was none, or no occasion for any, in the Historical Narration of it. There are many Facts recorded in Scripture, which were done, as well by Moses as other People, without the Inspiration or Command of God, nay, some which were done in Contradiction to his express Precept and Authority: and yet the History of them is allowed to have been written under a Divine Direction or Influence. The Degree of Inspiration is not the present Question; it is enough for our Purpose, that there was such an over-ruling Influence as kept the Writers from recording any Thing disagreeable to the Will of God, or to the

^a Remarks, p. 74.

^b Remarks, p. 74, 75.

Berriman. the Truth of Things; such as excluded all Degree of Fiction, or Political Lying, which are but other Names for Fraud and Imposture. And what then will be the Consequence, if Moses was not inspired in the Matter of this Institution? He yet relates the Fact as it was, and requires us to believe no more than was really transacted. Let this then be the Standard whereby we should examine the Authority of his other Laws; and where he tells us he had the Divine Command, or Inspiration, let us still believe he relates the Fact as it was; so that wherever it is said, the Lord spake unto Moses, the Law which follows could be no Political Contrivance, nor the Result of his own Fondness for Egyptian Rites.

But now our Author has pitch'd upon this single Instance in Proof of his Assertion, it falls out unfortunately for him, that he perfectly mistakes the Case, and imputes that intirely to human Management, which was indeed referred to the Decision and Appointment of Almighty God. This Interview with Jethro was just after the People had passed through the Red Sea, and fought with Amalek, before the legal Precepts were delivered from Mount Sinai. Jethro was too wise a Man, to imagine that his Counsel should have Weight enough to model the Government of that People, in whose Rescue and Deliverance the Hand of God had so visibly appeared. And therefore he expressly cautioned his Advice with this Reserve or Condition, — If thou shalt do this Thing, and GOD COMMAND THEE SO; which was referring Moses, after all, to the Divine Direction. And though he took upon him, in a kind and modest manner, to suspect the Convenience of that Method in which Moses had acted hitherto, without any express Command, and only because God had not yet named any Assistants to him; yet he did not presume to advise an Alteration of his own Head, but only to suggest what appeared feasible to him, if it should meet with the Divine Approbation. Accordingly, when it follows, that Moses hearkned to the Voice of his Father-in-law, and did ALL that he had said, and chose able Men out of all Israel, &c. It has been thought necessary by good Expositors^a to suppose, that he applied to God, and received his Direction at this Time, though it be not here recorded: Whilst others take the Account of Moses's Compliance to be proleptical, and refer to a Fact that happened afterwards. And though either of these Expositions may suffice, as far as we are concerned for an Answer to this Author, yet I shall take leave to explain the Grounds of the latter somewhat more fully, without declaring absolutely for the one or the other.

The Delivery of the Law soon followed this Advice of Jethro; and neither in the Preparation of the legal Utensils, nor in the Sin of the golden Calf, during the Absence of Moses, is there any Intimation of such Judges authorized among the People. There is mention, indeed, of some who were Princes of Tribes, and others who were Elders of Israel. And these, without doubt, were the same who, as well before the coming of Jethro, as after Moses's coming down from the Mount, were termed the Rulers of the Congregation. This seems to be the Remainder of their old Constitution in Egypt, in consequence of that Division into Tribes which Jacob had appointed. There we find the Elders were convened by Moses; and that Convention is termed by the Seventy *ἡσούσια*, the Senate, or Assembly of Elders. Which would incline one to think, that they were not called so merely in respect to their Age and Wisdom, (as some Learned Men^a have thought) but to their Office and Authority among the People^c. What degree of Power might be lodged in them, it is not easy to determine: Most probably at first, whilst they enjoyed the Favour of the Kings of Egypt, they were allowed the Exercise of Civil Jurisdiction, upon the Foot of Patriarchal Laws. But this, without doubt, must have been greatly restrained and limited under the Bondage and Oppression of the latter Pharaohs; and perhaps it extended little farther than to the private Exercise of their Religion. At least, they had no Exercise of Civil Jurisdiction at the Time of their coming out of Egypt; for then there could have been no Ground for Jethro's Observation, that the whole Burden lay upon

^a See Bp. Patrick, in loc.

^d Vid. Selden de Synedr. Lib. I. c. 15. and Bp. Patrick, in Exod. iii. 16.

^e Vid. Bertram de Rep. Jud. cap. 5.

upon Moses. These Elders were sometimes convened in a general Assembly; but at other Times, there seems to have been a select Number of Seventy, answerable to the seventy Heads of Families that came with Jacob into Egypt^f, from whence the twelve Wells, and threescore and ten Palm Trees, which were found in Elim, after passing the Red Sea, are understood to represent the twelve Tribes, (or their Princes) and this College of Elders^g. There was a select Number taken at the Rock in Horeb, before the coming of Jethro: And this therefore being Matter of usual Form and Custom, made it easy afterwards for Moses to take with him Seventy of the Elders of Israel, besides Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, when he went up towards the Mount. And these, as Persons known already for their Dignity, are expressly called, the Nobles of the Children of Israel. But that they belong'd to the former Constitution, whatsoever it were, and could not be the Judges or Magistrates advised by Jethro, may be argued from hence; because Aaron and Hur were at this very Time deputed, in that respect, to supply the Absence of Moses. Which, though a Learned Commentator^h restrains to their Hearing only the harder Causes, as appealable to Moses after Jethro's Constitution, yet the Words are so general [IF ANY Man have ANY Matters to do, let him come unto them;] that it seems not unreasonable to collect from them, that Moses had not yet constituted any other Judges.

But about fourteen Months after the coming out of Egypt, when the People were removed from the Wilderness of Sinai to that of Paran, there was a plain Occasion for doing it. It was in that Station that the People murmured for want of Flesh to eat; which gave Occasion to Moses to make the very Complaint which Jethro had suggested. I am not able to bear this People alone, because it is too heavy for me. Wherefore, says he, have I not found Favour in thy Sight, that thou layest the Burden of all this People upon me? What room to complain of his bearing the whole Burden alone, if there had been Officers already appointed to divide it with him? But it was on this Occasion that God was pleased to express his Approbation of Jethro's Counsel; and till now there seems to have been no such Constitution of inferior Officers, because there had been none commanded, which is the express Limitation under which Jethro had advised it. And the Lord said unto Moses, gather me seventy Men of the Elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the Elders of the People, and Officers over them; and bring them unto the Tabernacle of the Congregation, that they may stand there with thee. And I will come, and talk with thee there: And I will take of the Spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them, and they shall bear the Burden of the People with thee, that thou bear it not thy self alone. Accordingly it is related, that Moses went out and told the People the Words of the Lord, and gathered the seventy Men of the Elders of the People, and set them round about the Tabernacle. And the Lord came down in a Cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the Spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy Elders. The Ground and Occasion of this Constitution, that Moses might not bear the Burden alone, is so plainly the same with that assigned by Jethro, that it may be admitted as a reasonable Conjecture, that the Officers now appointed, were the same which Jethro had advised. So that Moses's Compliance seems to be proleptically related in the Book of Exodus, and the Circumstance of it is to be more fully gathered from this Place in Numbers; from whence it will follow, that Moses, agreeably to Jethro's Advice, had waited for the Divine Appointment, before he proceeded to make any Alteration.

It will be said, perhaps, That the Burden here complained of by Moses, was not that of hearing Causes, but of bearing the Murmurs of the People against his Conduct in the Wilderness. But where is the Inconsistency of supposing that the whole Burden of the People was represented before God, although a Part only had given the immediate Occasion for it? or that the same Officers should be appointed to divide with him in one Case, as well as in the other? For who, indeed, could be so fit to silence the Murmurs and Reproaches of the People, as the

VOL. III.

(7 L)

same

^f Vid. Bertram, ut supra.^g Vid. Selden, ut supra.^h Bp. Patrick, in loc.

Berriman.

Exod. iv.

29.

— xii. 21.

— xv. 27.

— xvii. 5.

— xxiv.

1, 9.

Ver. 11.

Ver. 14.

Numb. x.

11, 12.

— xi.

4, &c.

Ver. 14.

Ver. 12.

Ver. 16,

17.

Ver. 24,

25.

Berriman. same who were to judge and determine Causes in the ordinary Course of Jurisdiction? As there is no other Divine Precept of this Nature recorded, I find myself inclinable to close in with the Judgment of a very Learned Prelateⁱ, that this was the Time when Jethro's Advice was executed. But if any one shall judge otherwise, he must suppose some other Divine Precept to have intervened, though it be not expressly recorded, since the Tenor of Jethro's Advice very clearly requires it.

It has been thought, indeed, by many Expositors^k, Jewish as well as Christian, that the whole Story of Jethro's coming to Moses is proleptically placed in Exodus, and belongs, in real Order of Time, to this Section in Numbers. But as there seems to be no Ground for the placing Jethro's Story in Exodus, if some Part of it had not then happened, so the Discourse of Moses to him, concerning their Deliverance out of Egypt, and, by the Way, without any mention of the giving of the Law, and also the Sacrifices which Jethro offered, not agreeably to legal Prescriptions, are convincing Arguments to me, that this Interview must have been previous to it. The Judgment of Moses at that Time was regulated, without doubt, upon the Foot of those Patriarchal Laws, which had been observed by pious Men in earlier Ages^l. And when Jethro interposed with his Advice for altering the Method of Hearing all Causes himself, the Compliance of Moses might be just mentioned, for the sake of placing all in one View, although it was not actually done till some Time afterwards, as in its proper Place is more fully related in the Book of Numbers.

Exod.
xviii. 8.

Ver. 12.

There seems to be but one Objection of any moment against this Interpretation; and that is, That the Number of Seventy Judges seems too small to admit of their being distinguished into the several Classes of Rulers over Thousands, Hundreds, Fifties, and Tens. And this Objection, indeed, would be insuperable, if we could give Credit to that extravagant Conceit of the Rabbins, that there were no less than Seventy eight thousand six hundred Prefects, or Judges, constituted upon Jethro's Model^m. But till we can have better Evidence in what Method their several Districts were distinguished, there will be the less Occasion to lay stress on this Objection.

That this Matter may have all the Light which can be thrown upon it, I will here set down that other Passage in Deuteronomy, where Moses gives a Rehearsal of it in this manner. And I spake unto you at THAT TIME, saying, I am not able to bear you my self alone. — How can I my self alone bear your Cumbrance, and your Burden, and your Strife. Take ye wise Men, and understanding, and known among your Tribes, and I will make them Rulers over you. And ye answered me, and said, The Thing which thou hast spoken is good for us to do. So I took the Chief of your Tribes, wise Men, and known, and made them Heads over you, Captains over Thousands, and Captains over Hundreds, and Captains over Fifties, and Captains over Tens, and Officers among your Tribes. And I charged your Judges at that Time, saying, Hear the Causes between your Brethren. — And the Cause that is too hard for you, bring it unto me, and I will hear it.

Deut. i.
9. &c.

That Moses here gives Account of his complying with the Advice of Jethro, is evident, as well from the Distinction of these Rulers, Captains over Thousands, Hundreds, Fifties, and Tens, as from the End of their Appointment, to dispatch the easier Causes themselves, and refer the harder to him. And from hence the Samaritan Copyist took the Liberty to transcribe that Speech of Moses out of Deuteronomy, and insert it in the Book of Exodus, as clearly belonging to the same History. And that this Appointment of the Rulers was no other than that of the Seventy Elders in the Book of Numbers, may be argued as well from the Circumstance of Time, AT THAT TIME, viz. when the People had moved from the Wilderness of Sinai to that of Paran, as also from that both are introduced with the same Complaint of Moses, though differently directed to God, and

ⁱ See Bp. Cumberl. de Legibus Patriarchar. in his Orig. Gent. Antiq. Tract. 9. p. 399, 400.

^k Vid. Poli. Synops. in Exod. and Selden de Synedr. Lib. II. cap. 2. § 4.

^l See Bp. Cumberland, ut supra.

^m Vid. Selden de Synedr. Lib. I. c. 15.

to the People, that the Burden was too great for him, (the very Thing which Jethro had suggested;) and both were meant as an effectual Remedy of that Complaint. Nor ought we to omit what was suggested before, That whereas Jethro had advised the waiting for a Divine Command, there is no other Divine Command recorded in relation to this Matter, but that in the Book of Numbers. Berriman.

But since the Authorⁿ I am dealing with insists on the Consent or Approbation of the People, mentioned in the Book of Deuteronomy, as if that would prove it a mere human Constitution; I will give a brief State of the Matter upon the Scheme proposed, from the three Passages compared together, that we may see the Order and Procedure of the whole Business. First, Jethro gave his Advice, grounded on his Observation of the Toil and Fatigue which such Multiplicity of Causes must needs create; but inserts at the same Time an express Caution to wait for a Divine Command. Moses some Time after takes Occasion, from the Murmuring of the People, to represent before God the great Burden of being singly constituted over them. God was pleased not to disapprove of his Complaint; but ordered him to select seventy Persons and present them before him, that he might endue them with the same Spirit as he had Moses, in order to divide the Burden with him. Moses upon this acquaints the People with the great Burden and Fatigue of his Office, and the Need he had of other Hands to help him, together with the Directions he had received from God; and accordingly uses their Advice and Consent in the Choice of proper Persons for that Purpose. When this was done, and they were distinguished into such Ranks and Orders as Jethro had advised, he presented them before God; and then their Authority was confirmed and attested by the Effusion of the Prophetick Spirit.

And now, what has our Author gained by this single Fact he has produced? It is short of his Purpose, as he has stated it himself: But as stated by Moses, it is clearly against him. But since he likes the Method of arguing from Facts, it may be fit to observe to him, that the whole Conduct of Moses, both in Egypt and the Wilderness, as well as the Tenor and Purport of many of his Laws, was so extraordinary, and contrary to Rules of human Policy, as plainly demonstrate them not to be the Result of any human Forecast or Contrivance, but ordained by the Wisdom, and supported by the Power, of that Supreme Being, who is able to execute whatever he designs. He may see this observed by Dr. Jenkins^o in a Variety of Instances, as well as ingeniously urged in two special Instances by a Person^p that has writ Reflections on his Letter and Defence; and more fully demonstrated in another Instance by the masterly Pen of a very judicious and discerning Prelate^q.

The Revelation of Moses was that System of Religion, under which the Jewish State was erected and continued. It was under the Influence and Persuasion of its Divine Authority, that the Prophetick Writings of the Old Testament were constantly delivered. It is attested and appealed to in the New Testament, as the undoubted Word of God, and designed to be preparatory to the Gospel Dispensation. So that he who aims to weaken the Authority of Moses, does really subvert the Foundations of Revealed Religion, and can have little Title to that Character which this Author affects, of a Sincere Christian.

I have no Disposition to lessen the Number of sincere Christians. The Lord add² unto them, how many soever they be, an hundred fold. But it concerns us to take care that no one, under the Garb and Pretence of Christianity, may insinuate such Principles as destroy the very Life and Spirit of it. I should be loth to twist myself into a personal Contention: But here the Merits of the Cause do so plainly rest on the Inspiration of the Books of Moses, and the other Scriptures, which this Author has in effect given up, under Pretence of not maintaining every single Passage as the Word of God^r, that we may fairly call upon him to reconcile this insolent Attack on Revelation with any real Belief or Persuasion of Christianity. 2 Sam. xxiv. 3.

It seems designed to prepare himself for such a Challenge, that he has sketched out a Plan (as he calls it) or rough Draught of such an Answer, as will, in his Judgment,

ⁿ Remarks, p. 75.
the Letter to Dr. Waterland, p. 29, 30.

^o Reasonableness of Christian Religion, par. ii. chap. 6.

^p Reflections on

^q Bp. Sherlock's fourth Dissertation, annexed to the Use and Intent of Prophecy.

^r Letter to Dr. Waterland, p. 44.

Berriman. Judgment, be the most effectual to confute and overthrow the Hypothesis of the Book entitled, Christianity as Old as the Creation^{*}. Let us look a little into this Way of answering, and we shall be able to guess better at his Principles. Why then, without offering one Word throughout this whole Plan, to assert the Truth of Revelation, or the Divine Authority of any System of Religion, he only undertakes that that Author's[†] Scheme may easily be shewn, even upon his own Principles, to be both irrational, because impossible to be reduced to Practice; and immoral, because hurtful to the Publick.

That it is impracticable[‡], he appeals to the Testimony of all Ages; which teach us, that Reason, whatever Strength or Force it might have with particular Men, yet never had Credit or Authority enough in the World to be received as a publick and authentick Rule, either of Religious or Civil Life. This (he observes) is allowed by all the great Reasoners of the Heathen World; and the Experience of its Insufficiency as a Guide of Life, is given by many of them as the very Cause of the Invention, and Establishment of Religion. It seems then, Religion was a mere human Invention, in their Opinion; nor has our Author thought fit to set it higher, but esteems it Ground enough for such Invention, if human Reason be of itself defective. But who sees not that this Argument may be retorted by the Infidel upon the same Principles? If human Reason could invent a Religion sufficient to be the Guide of Life, then human Reason is not in itself defective, since it gains its End by such Means as itself supplies. But, perhaps, it was his Meaning, that human Reason has really Strength or Force enough with particular Men of a deeper Insight and Penetration, to instruct them in all they are concerned to know. Only they are obliged to have Recourse to Fraud and Imposture, for better governing the Vulgar, whose Faculties, either for want of Capacity, or due Attention, reach not to discern the native Strength and Energy of Reason. And upon this Account, he observes they have[§] derived their Authority from the Pretence of a Divine Original, and a Revelation from Heaven. In this, indeed, our Author has put all Religions on a Level, without asserting in this Sketch of an Answer to Infidels, that there is any one which is really of a Divine Original. Here had been a proper Place for a sincere Christian to have asserted the Truth of the Christian Revelation; and to have shewn, that whilst all other Religions pretended to proceed from God, they plainly confessed not only the Insufficiency of Reason, but also the real Need of a Divine Interposition. Without this, he leaves the Adversary in Possession of a main Point, That human Reason is sufficient in itself; and if all cannot perceive the Strength or Force of it, yet those of better Capacity may direct the Less-discerning, without any Help of Revelation.

After this he goes on to the other Branch of his Work, and undertakes to shew^{*}, That an Attempt to overthrow Christianity, as it is now established by Law, derived from our Ancestors, confirmed by the Belief and Practice of so many Ages, must be Criminal and Immoral; even though we should allow it all this while to be a meer Imposture, on a Level only with all the other Impostures that are in the World. The Reason he gives is, Because the Moralists of the Heathen World, though they saw clearly the Cheat and Forgery of the established Religion, yet always persuaded and recommended a Submission to it; well knowing what Mischief must needs befall the State, by the Subversion of Constitutions so greatly revered by the People. So that Religion is considered meerly as a Political or State Engine, and Heathen Maxims are set up for the Guide of Life, by him who would pretend to disclaim the Sufficiency of Reason, But surely Truth must be a firmer Support of Government than Falshood; and therefore they will approve themselves the best Subjects, who either shew the established Religion to be true, or, by such Methods as their Station admits, reform it if it be erroneous. At least there can be no Immorality in thus detecting Imposture, and supporting the Cause of Truth. But to support and comply with Imposture, because it is established, is contrary to all my Notions of Morality, as well as inconsistent with the Character which this Author affects, of being[†] drawn into this Contro-

^{*} Letter to Dr. Waterland, p. 48.

[†] Ibid. p. 48.

[‡] Ibid. p. 49.

[§] Ibid.

^{*} Ibid. p. 50.

[†] Ibid. p. 51.

Controversy by no other Motive but a sincere Love of Truth, and a sincere Resolution to embrace it. *Let it be his next Trial of Skill to reconcile the Love of Truth with the Vindication of Imposture.* Berriman.

Non bene conveniunt, nec in unâ fede morantur.

In the next Place, this Author proceeds to consider ^a Christianity as the best of all other Religions: By which we are not to understand that he means to consider it as having any Truth in it; for he had before put that out of the Question, by proposing Religion under no other View but that of human Invention. The best Religion therefore with him, must be the best Invention; not upon a Level with all other Impostures, or Inventions, (as he had stated it before) but superior to them; i. e. better calculated to serve the Ends for which it was invented; which, with him, are meerly worldly or secular. And accordingly he goes on to explain it in the next Words, — The best contrived, to promote publick Peace, and the Good of Society. From whence he argues, ^a that his Crime, or Immorality, who endeavours to overthrow Christianity, will be aggravated in proportion, as he seeks to destroy a better System of Religion, and introduce a worse. But why should not all Systems be trown off together, if they be all false, or meer Matter of Invention? Why, no; because this Author adds, that ^b some traditional Religion, or other, must always take Place, as necessary to keep the World in Order. But this then will be an Argument with me, that some Revelation must be true; since it is not to be conceived that God should leave Mankind without that Direction, a Belief or Supposition of which is necessary to the Subsistence of Society. And if any System be true, surely that ought to be embraced, and every other should give Place to it.

This now is the Foundation upon which that Author, so fond of his own Performance, and so apt to throw out his Contempt on others, proposes to erect his Works for the Overthrow of Infidelity, without clearing any one Text from the Cavils urged against it, or so much as asserting the Truth of any Revelation. But is it possible he could be in earnest, in framing such a weak and contemptible Vindication of our happy Establishment? Can this be the Way to defend the Christian Cause? Or, does it not rather betray it to the Malice of its Enemies? Is this the Method to silence the Objections that are made against our holy Religion? Or, does it not expose it rather more to the Scoffs and Ridicule of the Objectors?

Non tali auxilio, nec defensoribus istis tempus eget.

Had our Author stopped at his first Pamphlet, it might reasonably have been suspected, that he admitted not the Truth of any Part of the Christian Revelation. And though he has thought fit, in his last Efforts^c, to acknowledge the general Inspiration of the Scriptures, yet he reserves to himself such Liberty of making some Exceptions to the general Rule^d, as must leave it doubtful, after all, what Part he receives as the Word of God, and how much he ascribes to the Fiction or Invention of Men. But I am weary of pursuing him through so much Disguise and Subterfuge. Only thus much is extorted from me by a just Indignation and Concern, to see our Religion torn up by the Roots (as it were) by one, from whom better Things might be expected.

^a Letter to Dr. Waterland, p. 55.

^a Ibid. p. 56.

^b Ibid.

^c Remarks, p. 69.

^d Ibid. p. 70.

P O S T S C R I P T.

Berriman. **S**ince these Papers went to the Press, the Author of the *Letter to Dr. Waterland* has published a fourth Pamphlet, under the Title of *Remarks on some Observations, &c.* But as here is little offered either to explain or vindicate his former Assertions, I see no Reason either for altering, or adding to what I have urged against him. Or, if any one should so far differ from me, as to think there is any thing material in it, I doubt not it will in due Time be examined by proper Hands. He aims, indeed, at softening his Supposition of *some Degree of Fiction* in *Moses*, or *Political Lying*. But though I should be glad to allow him the Benefit of any Explication, which appears sincere and pertinent, yet this is offered with so awkward a Grace, and supported by Instances so little to his Purpose, and leaves the sacred Truths of God so dark, and undistinguished from Errors and human Compositions, that, till he shall be pleased to make some more express Acknowledgment, of the Honour and Divine Authority of Scripture, we shall be forced to rank him amongst those Writers he describes, as doing Service to Religion by writing against it; and so *keeping the Clergy in Breath and Exercise*. And under that Character I leave him to the Enjoyment of his new Friends; who, to his *Comfort*, rather than his Credit, *value him the more* for being disliked, or (as he calls it) *persecuted* by his old Ones.

S E R.

SERMON I.

The Defects of Human Reason, and the Necessity of Revelation.

Preached, *January the 5th, 1729-30.*

The First SERMON on this TEXT.

ROM. vii. 24, 25.

O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from the Body of this Death? I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord—

THE Name of *Atheism* has ever been so odious and execrable in the general Account and Estimation of Mankind, that few have been so hardy as to espouse and defend it with an open Face; but the most Irreligious have usually chosen to disguise their Sentiments with borrowed Colours, and, instead of opposing all Notion of a Deity, to suggest such a one as may abate the Efficacy, and weaken the Influences of believing it. Berriman.
Sermon
I.

THERE have been some have meant no more under the Name of GOD, than this visible System of Matter; to which, without the Operation of spiritual Agents, they attribute all the Effects of Reason and Intelligence, and the whole Correspondence and Harmony of Things. They give it the Divine Name, upon account of that eternal Existence they ascribe to it, or to its Parts; since it is found necessary to admit in every Scheme, That if Something had not been always, there never could have been any Thing. But whatever Name they use, this is easily seen to be nothing else but downright *Atheism*; since it excludes all Substance distinct from Matter, and lays the Groundwork for no higher Rule of Action than what may arise from Order and Convenience.

NOR is there any greater End of Religion answered by the *Epicurean* Hypothesis, which admits the Existence of Deities indeed, but as an indolent, unactive kind of Beings, that do no body knows what, and live no body knows where; that are neither concerned in the Creation nor Government of the World; that have no Knowledge of the Actions of Men, nor any Regard to punish or reward them. This is plainly but another Cover for *Atheism*; and as they seem not to have believed those Deities themselves to be immaterial, but clothed with Bodies of like Form and Figure with our own, so they evidently took off all that Restraint which the Belief of them should have laid on human Actions, by utterly exempting them from all Concern with Men, and supposing Mankind accountable to no superior Being. The wiser among the Heathens did easily perceive, that such Acknowledgment of the Existence of a God was equivalent to a flat Denial of it; and that *Epicurus's* Design, in so impertinent a Supposition, could be only to decline the popular Odium, and escape the Scandal, at the same Time that he retained the Malignity of *Atheism*.

'T W E R E

Berriman.
Sermon
I.

"WERE well if our modern *Deists*, or professed Infidels, could free themselves from all Suspicion of the like Impiety. *Deism*, if taken in the best Sense, admits all the Principles of Natural Religion, and lays such a Foundation, upon which we might easily convince Men of the Truth of *Christianity*, when brought forth into a proper Light. But it is greatly to be feared, that they who pretend to *Deism* at present, do take it only in the negative Sense, as it disclaims the Truth of Revelation; and do not so much acknowledge the Existence of a God, as deny what is fit to be believed concerning Him. So that they are truly Men of no Principles, or who have no proper Rule of Action; and in this View *Deism* and *Atheism* are but two Names for one and the same Thing.

WHILST Men are so ill disposed to all Impressions of Religion, there can be little Hope of any good Effect upon them from Argument and Disputation; an evil Heart of Unbelief will so pervert their Faculties, and stop up the Avenues of spiritual Illumination, that they will even admit the greatest Absurdities in opposition to Religion, rather than consent to what is mysterious and unfathomable in it. So long as Pride or Sensuality, the Indulgence of bodily Appetites and Passions, or the vain Affectation of making themselves considerable, are suffered to sway their Judgments, and influence their Notions of Religion, they may inveigh, as they please, against the Power of Priestcraft, and the Prejudice of Education; but I am bold to say, there is no Prejudice equal to that which governs them, which taking its Root deep in Malice, owes its Growth and Confirmation to the continual Increase of inordinate Affections. And what Success can be expected from our Endeavours to reclaim those, who are under the Power of such violent Attachments, and only remain Blind, because they will not open their Eyes?

MEAN while, the Pretences which they make to the *Religion of Nature*, though they really subvert it, may prove the Occasion of seducing, or at least of perplexing other People, of less Penetration and Discernment, whose Error therefore may be Matter of Infirmary, as theirs is of Malice. For the sake of these others, if not of themselves, it will be necessary to examine into the Ground of their Pretences, that if their Disease be too malignant to be cured, the Contagion however may be kept from spreading, and doing farther Mischief.

Now there are two Ways especially, by which the Writers of this Sort endeavour to propagate their Notions, and fortify themselves in Infidelity. One is, by extolling the Sufficiency of *natural Light*, as a competent Guide in Matters of Religion, which neither needs, nor ought to have any additional Assistance. The other is, by making Exceptions to the *Christian* Scheme in particular, as being either absurd in itself, or insufficiently attested. In both Attempts they have been baffled by the clear and solid Reasonings of those who have stood up in the Defence of Truth, and have from time to time opposed their Cavils with Success. But since they blush not to repeat their stale and baffled Sophistry, and look for certain Victory by the Means which have so often failed them; it concerns us to have Recourse to the same Ways of Reasoning by which they have been worsted heretofore, and against which (we trust) they will never be able to hold up. In this Method of proceeding, if nothing new be offered, at least, the antient Arguments may be pointed, and applied to present Controversies, and the People of less Experience or Capacity, may be furnished with such Preservatives, as their own Observation and Reading could not have supplied.

To this End, I have chosen to pursue the Design of the Honourable Founder of this Lecture, from that Passage which was read out of the Epistle to the *Romans*, where the Apostle is lamenting the Defect of any other Method for Pardon and Salvation, besides that which is revealed by the Gospel of *Christ*, and applauds at the same Time the mighty Power and Efficacy of the *Christian* Scheme to that Purpose, which alone is sufficient to relieve our Misery. If this can be made good, the Complaint of our Adversaries will justly

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be retorted on themselves; the Gospel Revelation will be cleared from the Charge of Insufficiency, and the Defects and Absurdities which have been so boldly objected to our Scheme, will be much more properly looked for in their own.

I CONCERN not myself on this Occasion, with the Dispute there is among Expositors, about the Interpretation of this Passage of St. Paul, whether the Expressions which he uses were strictly applicable to himself, considered as a regenerate Christian, and one of eminent Qualifications and Attainments; or whether he did not rather personate an unbelieving Jew (which is not unusual in his Epistles) made sensible, in some measure, of his Duty by the Law, but destitute of the Aids of Grace and Power to perform it. It might be of Moment to settle and adjust that Difficulty, if the Doctrine of Justification were our Point in view, with regard to those several Schemes or Tenets, whereby that Doctrine is differently understood and stated by the Professors of Christianity themselves. But with regard to the Controversy between Christians and Infidels, all Expositions will agree in a Sense sufficient to our Purpose; viz. That all Men are naturally in a depraved and sinful Estate; so that whatever Knowledge they may have of their Duty, either from the Dictates of Reason, or from the external Benefit of Revelation, yet they perceive a vehement Attachment to the contrary, which they are neither able to root out, nor in any tolerable Degree to regulate, till assisted by the gracious Aid and Succours of the Gospel; and which, after all, must leave us subject to the Sentence of Death, were it not for that wonderful Salvation which is wrought by Christ, to restore us to the Hopes of Immortality. So that the Question in the Text may be put by any Man, viewing himself only in his natural Estate, and seeing his Need of a Deliverance. *O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from the Body of this Death?* The Answer that follows, directs to Christ as the only Author of Salvation: *I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.* In which Words the Apostle expresses his Thankfulness to God for the Gospel Revelation, which only could instruct him in the Way or Method whereby he should obtain a Release, as well from the Dominion, as the Punishment of Sin.

THIS Clause is read with a little Variation in some Greek Copies, with which the vulgar Latin agrees; *εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ*, but *χαρίσ ᾧ θεῷ*, — not *I thank God*, — but the GRACE of God, — *through Jesus Christ our Lord.* And so, perhaps, the Reading would appear more grammatical, and contain a more direct Answer to the Question preceding. — *Who shall deliver me from the Body of this Death?* namely, *the Grace of God shall deliver me*; that Grace or Mercy of God, which is revealed and exhibited *through Jesus Christ our Lord.* But either Way the Drift or Purport of the Passage is one and the same: It expresses a Sense of the Miseries of human Nature, its Propensity to Sin, and Obligation to Punishment: It expresses an earnest Desire to find out some Method of Relief and Refreshment, together with the Vanity of looking for it, either from any natural Powers, or from the external Revelation of the Law of Moses. And withal it points out the Great and All-sufficient Author of Salvation, *Jesus Christ the Righteous*, who is our powerful Advocate with the Father, and able to save us to the uttermost; as having, by the Sacrifice of himself, made a satisfactory Atonement for our Sins.

FROM the Words therefore thus opened and explained, I have a fair Occasion to do three Things; viz.

- I. To observe the Defects and Insufficiency of *natural Light*, to answer the Purposes and Ends of Religion. Then,
- II. To collect from hence the great Need Mankind stood in of Revelation; of some stated Scheme of Religion to be given by God, in order to beget an assured Hope and Expectation of his Favour. And,
- III. To assert the Reasonableness of receiving that System of Religion which is revealed in Scripture, as being every way qualified to give us the most sure and solid Satisfaction.

Berriman.
Sermon
I.

THE two first of these I shall treat of in a more cursory and transient Way, designing them only as an Introduction to the last, which is to be the principal Theme or Subject of the ensuing Lectures.

I. FIRST, therefore, I begin with observing the Defects and Insufficiency of *natural Light*, to answer the Purposes and Ends of *Religion*. And in the Entrance of this Enquiry it may be proper to remark, That Men do very often impose upon themselves, by ascribing all that to the Discovery of *natural Light*, which they perceive to be fit and agreeable to Reason, without distinguishing by what Steps and Methods they arrive at that Perception; or how their Faculties are enabled to take in the Knowledge of several Particulars. It may be, and I think upon Examination we shall find it so in fact, that the Gospel has prescribed some Instances of moral Duty, which our Reason, when so revealed, does readily approve, and sees to be expedient, which yet our unassisted Faculties, without such Revelation, either would not have perceived at all, or but darkly and imperfectly. The like is to be said of the Motives to Obedience, those Rewards and Punishments, which are meant either to animate our Hopes, or to alarm our Fears, which might perhaps have been guessed at and conjectured, but with Doubt and Hesitation, had they not been stated by inspired Persons in unexceptionable Terms, and brought into the clearest Light. And is it not then an Instance of great Perverseness and Ingratitude, for Men to argue against the Need of Revelation, from the Experience of that Knowledge they receive from it; and to take an Estimate of their natural Abilities and Strength of Faculties, from that Measure of Understanding and Science they enjoy by the Addition of those very Helps which they labour to exclude, and judge superfluous? This is applicable, in some measure, to that Degree of Light which is to be observed in the more civilized Nations among the Heathens^a, which did not arise merely from the Strength of their own Faculties, but was in part received by Tradition from their Forefathers, which will resolve itself into some Instructions given at first by the Creator, darkened (it may be) by Length of Time, and Obscurity of the Conveyance; but then again improved by Conversation with the *Jews*, or such other Nations as had from them some Knowledge of the Mosaick and Prophetical Revelation.

WHEN the Faculties of the Mind are so enlightened, no Wonder if, by Use and Exercise, they be made to see a great deal more than could have been expected from their own Strength. But if we would judge what human Reason can do without these Advantages, we should look among such Nations as enjoyed them not; and then, I fear, the Examples of the *Negroes* and the ^b *Hottentots*, will give but little Encouragement to so vain a Conceit of the Reach of human Faculties, and their Sufficiency to guide us without the Addition of superior Light. I know no Reason to dispute, but their Faculties may in themselves be capable of like Searches and Discoveries with the politer Nations: But for want of Admonitions to excite and rouse them, and give them proper Hints for Exercise, we find that, through a long Disuse and Neglect, they have sunk into a dull Insensibility, and are sad Monuments of the Blindness of human Understandings, and their utter Inability for discovering Divine Truths, without the Help of Divine Illumination.

HOWEVER, that our Adversaries may have no Pretence to complain of the Management of this Controversy, we will be content to deal with them upon their own Terms, and suppose the Light of Reason so strong and powerful, as to be able to discover All by itself, which it now sees and approves with the Advantage of former Revelations; I mean, which they profess to see and approve, who yet disown the Authority of those Revelations. And even in this View it cannot be difficult to perceive, how the Rule of *natural Light* must needs labour under signal Defects, and particularly in these four Respects; viz.

I. AS

^a See *Jenkins's Reasonableness of the Christian Religion*, Vol. I. par. 3. cap. 5. § 2.

^b Yet by the latest Accounts (See *Kolben's Present State of the Cape of Good Hope*, *English Translation*, Vol. I. cap. 3, 8, 9.) it appears, that even the *Hottentots* are not without traditional Religion, and some Use of Sacrifices.

1. As to the Instances and Measures of our Duty.
2. As to the Rise and Origin of Evil.
3. As to the Assurance of Pardon. And,
4. As to the Motives and Inducements to Obedience.

WITHOUT some tolerable Instruction in these Particulars, it is absurd to suppose that any Sense or Practice of *Religion* should be supported or maintained in the World. For the Life of Religion must consist as well in modelling the Temper of our Minds, as the external Behaviour of our Lives, upon a Principle of Trust and Confidence in the Supreme Being. But where will be the Ground of such Trust and Confidence, unless, besides a thorough Conviction of his Power and Supremacy, (so that there can be no opposite Being of Power sufficient to controul him) we have moreover such Knowledge of his Will, as may direct us to the Method of Acceptance with him; and withal, such a Belief of his Regard to our Conduct, as may represent it to be our highest Interest to serve him faithfully? And if it appears, upon Enquiry, that we have all acted in some Respects inconsistently with Duty, there can be no reasonable Method to preserve us from sinking into Despair, which is the Height of Irreligion, without hearing of some Means of Reconciliation and Pardon, whereby we may be sure of appeasing the offended Deity, and being restored to his Favour. Let us proceed therefore to make the Experiment, and observe how far *Nature* is able to conduct us, and where it fails and wavers. And,

1. *First*, As to the Instances and Measures of our Duty; can any one pretend, that ever any Philosopher, or any of the Magnifiers of moral Righteousness, did advance their Schemes of *Morality* to such a Height of Purity, as the Gospel of *Jesus* has done? The Prohibitions of Revenge, and the Virtue of loving Enemies, how amiable soever they appear as recommended in the *Christian* System, yet who will say the Obligation to them would have appeared without that Revelation, or will undertake to fix them solidly and undeniably, without being beholden to an higher Principle than that of *Nature*? They might be admired as something heroical, and above the Standard; but would hardly be insisted on as Matter of strict Duty, and necessary Obligation. Nay, the contrary Rules have been prescribed by the sagest Philosophers, as consistent with the Laws of *Nature*, and the standing Rules of Action^c.

To honour the Divine Image in *all Men*, and endeavour to promote their Happiness, whether they be likely, or not, to requite our good Offices with equal Kindness, appears, indeed, extremely agreeable to Reason, when once it is prescribed: But will any one pretend, that Reason alone would have been clear-sighted enough to have discerned the Obligation without farther Aid? or to have reproached those with Transgression who fell short of it? We might go through the several Parts or Precepts of *Morality*, and see how the *Christian* Religion has advanced them to the greatest Perfection, and founded them on the most solid and substantial Principles; how it strengthens our Sense of those Relations we bear to God, or one another, and sets before us the Duties resulting from them, with the brightest Evidence.

Now, if we could suppose it true of any Particular taken by itself, that it might have been discovered by meer natural Light, (which yet surely must have been attended with greater Doubt and Uncertainty) yet, when we view the whole System together, so complete in all its Parts, that it is not chargeable with any Defect; and at the same time so free from all Mixture of Absurdities, as not to admit any thing into it that is vain or superfluous; there will be Reason to acknowledge, that the *Light of Nature* could not have taught even the Doctrines of *Nature* with that Clearness and Solidity, but is greatly beholden to the brighter Light of *Revelation*, for the Advancement and Perfection of its own Precepts.

FOR

^c Vid. *Jenkins's Reasonableness of the Christian Religion*, Vol. 1. par. 3. cap. 5.

Berriman.
Sermon
I.

FOR a farther Confirmation of this Matter, let it briefly be considered, whether, in fact, the Knowledge of natural Duties has not gradually grown clearer and more evident, in proportion as the Light of Revelation has shone out with a brighter and more refulgent Lustre. It is not to be supposed, that *Plato* or *Aristotle*, or any of the ancient Philosophers, owed what they knew of Virtue entirely to the Searches of their own Faculties, without any Help from Tradition, or the Footsteps of previous Revelation. And yet, how did their Knowledge fall vastly short^d of what we find in *Seneca* and *Epicletus*, and those later Moralists, who wrote after the spreading of the Gospel Light^e, and borrowed a great Part of their Instructions from the Religion they refused to embrace. Their Discernment was cleared up in a Method that bore some Proportion to the Notices of Revelation; and therefore the *Ethicks* of the later Moralists exceeded their Predecessors, by virtue of that Help which they received from the Brightness of the *Christian* Institution, so far superior to what the others might derive, either from the *Jewish* Books, or from the Fragments of Tradition. Now that which has given so much Light, even to them who disclaim it, may well be presumed to do it more abundantly to those who receive and submit to it with Reverence. And accordingly it might be shewn in several Particulars, that the best of the *Heathen Moralists* have fallen greatly short of *Christian Morality*, and mixed their Precepts of Virtue with some absurd and inconsistent Allowances^f.

2. *Secondly*, The next Instance in which I would note the Defect and Insufficiency of *natural Light*, is with respect to the Rise and Origin of Evil. This, indeed, is a Point which, after all our Assistances, must be allowed to have a great deal of Obscurity and Intricacy in it. Nor is it needful that we should be able to give a clear Account of every Difficulty; provided we can say enough to secure the Honour of God, and serve the Ends of Religion, we may safely resolve all the rest into the Frailty and Dimness of human Understanding. Let us see then, how the Light of Nature will conduct us in this Labyrinth. That there is much Evil in the World, not only natural (which, in some Degree, does unavoidably follow^g the Condition of a finite Being) but also moral, which consists in the Breach and Violation of Duty, has ever been the Complaint of observing Men, and is confirmed by the Experience of all Ages. Or if there be some profane Persons, who have denied the Distinction between moral Good and Evil, they will be puzzled but the more to account for the Introduction of those natural Evils, consistently with the Wisdom and Perfection of the Creator, which are superadded as the Consequence or Punishment of what we reckon Immoralities. The Doctrine of *Transmigration of Souls* was invented in the *Heathen* World, to solve the Difficulties which arose from contemplating the Miseries of human Life, that they might be represented as the Punishment of Transgressions in a former State, to save the Honour of Divine Justice, and vindicate the seeming Inequalities of Providence. But besides that this Hypothesis was altogether arbitrary and precarious, it really did but shift the Difficulty, instead of solving it: For still the Question recurs, Whence had the Evils of that former State their Rise and Origin? How came the Works of the Supreme Being in any respect to be otherwise than Good? We find these two Methods of Solution arising from the Notions or Opinions of those who have followed the Reasonings of their own Minds: One is taken from the Doctrine of a *fatal Necessity*; the other from a Supposition of *two opposite Principles* of Good and Evil. Both which were very anciently received and maintained, by many who pretended to a deeper Knowledge of Philosophy: But it is hard to say, which is most injurious to the Honour of God, and contrary to the essential Perfections of his Nature.

As

^d See *Jenkins*, ut supra.

^e Hence the Author of *Christianity as old as the Creation* (p. 404.) may learn, that, in respect of the Knowledge of Morality, the World has been much mended since the Reign of Tiberius.

^f See Dr. *Jenkins's* Reasonableness, &c. Vol. I. par. 3. cap. 4.

^g See Archbishop *King* of the Origin of Evil, Cap. 2, 3, 4. with the Notes of his Translator.

As to the first of them, the Doctrine of a *fatal Necessity*, that must either be supposed independent upon God, or else resulting from his Will and Appointment. The former Supposition is an unworthy Abridgment of his Power, and the latter of his Goodness. Evil in the one Case is supposed to have a Cause above his Power or Controul: In the other Case he is himself supposed to be its Cause and Author. In both Cases the Foundations of Religion, the Grounds of our Trust, and Worship, and Obedience, are entirely subverted. We could have no sufficient Reasons for depending on the Help and Favour of that Being, who is either subject to the Determination of superior *Fate*, or has himself induced Men by a compulsive Influence to offend against the stated Rules of Duty.

Berriman.
Sermon
I.

NOR will the other Hypothesis, of *two opposite Principles*, be found to answer the Ends of Religion with any better Success; since it not only leaves the Difficulty untouched which it pretends to solve, (there being plainly the same Objections against making Creatures liable to be corrupted by some other Principle^h, which lie against making them capable of corrupting themselves) but withal it is wholly incompatible with the Immensity and boundless Extent of the Divine Perfections: For so much independent Power, as is ascribed to the evil Being, must of consequence be taken from the good one; which destroys the Notion of Infinity, and represents a Deity unable to do all the Good that he desires, or restrain the Evil that he hates. How then is this Difficulty cleared up by *Revelation*? Not by any nice and philosophical Deductions, but by a plain and rational Account of Fact, sufficient to preserve the Honour of God, and the Influences of Religion. We have a plain Account of the Temptation and Apostasy of Man; from which we learn, that Sin was introduced by the Abuse of Liberty; that the Creature, which had Freedom of Will, in order to make it capable of Virtue, did voluntarily abuse it into an Occasion of Vice; that the first Author and Promoter of Sin, was himself the Creature of God, and subject to his Government. So that there is neither any room to charge God with being Author of Sin, nor yet to suppose a distinct and independent Principle of Evil; since Liberty of Will, which is itself a valuable Privilege, and without which there could properly be no Virtue, so that it must have been worse with Mankind to have wanted itⁱ, has yet put it in the Creature's Power to be guilty of Vice. And if this does not entirely solve all the Difficulties in Speculation, yet it solves them enough for the Direction of our Practice, and to preserve a religious Fear and Reverence for God.

IF our modern Infidels should pretend to found the same Answer upon Principles of *Nature*, yet the Defects of ancient Philosophy are sufficient to convince us, they never could have done so without the Help of *Revelation*; and even still, unless we do admit or presuppose the Authority and Truth of such *Revelation*, their Solution, at the best, must be but wavering and doubtful, and cannot be received without great Uncertainty and Diffidence. For who shall assure us of the Reality of such original Liberty, and the actual Abuse of it by a voluntary Disobedience, if we have no authentick History remaining of the Fact, nor its Memory preserved by the concurrent Doctrine and Tradition of succeeding Times? By looking into ourselves, we may perceive some Degree of Liberty, but not without a great deal of Bias and Inclination to Sin; so that the Difficulty can never be cleared up, without supposing Man to be created at first in a more perfect State: And the Assurance of this is to be had only from Revealed Religion.

AND thus much for the two first Defects of Natural Religion, with respect to the Measures of our Duty, and the Origin of Evil: The other two, which relate to the Assurance of Pardon, and the Motives to Obedience, remain to be stated in another Discourse.

Now to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be all Honour, &c.

^h Archbishop King of the Origin of Evil, cap. 2. § 8.

ⁱ Ibid. cap. 5. sect. 5. subsect. 2, 6.

S E R M O N II.

The Defects of Human Reason, and the Necessity of Revelation.

Preached, *February* the 2d, 1729-30.

The Second S E R M O N on this T E X T.

R O M. vii. 24, 25.

O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from the Body of this Death? I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord—

Berriman.
Sermon
II.

IN pointing out the Defects and Insufficiency of *natural Light*, for answering the Purposes and Ends of *Religion*, I had observed, both as to the Instances and Measures of our Duty, and likewise as to the Rise and Origin of Evil, how uncertain our Notions must have been at best, without the Help of *Revelation*, and in what Danger of running into such Error and Falshood, as would destroy that reverential Regard to the Supreme Being; that Sense of our Relation to him, and of the Duties resulting from such Relation, which are necessary to preserve any real Virtue or Religion in the World. With the same View I proceed now, in the

3. *Third Place*, to mention the Defects of the same *natural Light*, as to the Assurance of Pardon. I suppose a Man under this Head to have acquired some general, though not an adequate, Knowledge and Understanding of his Duty. And I suppose him withal to be sensible in fact of many and frequent Deviations from it, as well by the Omission of those Things which ought to have been done, as by the doing of such as should have been avoided. In consequence of this Breach of the Divine Law, I suppose him to be sensible that he stands exposed to the Divine Vengeance: And a very important Enquiry it must be, to the Ease and Satisfaction of his own Breast, whether there be any certain Method, and which it is, to obtain Pardon for his Sin, and get released from this State of Condemnation. He would be willing to believe, and without doubt it is reasonable, that the Supreme Being is kind and merciful, as well as just. But the Difficulty would be to find out such a Scheme, as might secure the Honour of all his Attributes, and preserve them in Consistency with one another, and then to be assured that that Scheme was right; that so he might be free from any Doubt or Perplexity in a Matter of such intimate Concern.

FORGIVENESS, without question, is a Matter of Favour; and as such cannot be securely relied on, but in Virtue of some Promise. Repentance, indeed, would appear to be the most likely Method in our Power, for averting the Effects

fects of his Displeasure, and conciliating his Favour and Kindness towards us^a. But whether any thing in our Power could be effectual, might at least be doubted; and if it were, yet still it would be difficult to state the Measures and Effects of such Repentance, especially in case of repeated and habitual Wickedness. And after all, our Deductions could at best be nothing more than probable Conjectures, and little qualified to satisfy a wounded Spirit.

Berriman.
Sermon
II.

SUCH Repentance, without doubt, ought to include a forsaking of those Sins which we profess to detest. And if this could be done without any Charge of Defect, still it would be nothing more than Matter of strict Duty: And how should that atone or satisfy for past Offences? Much more, if this cannot be done to such Perfection, but is followed by many new and grievous Violations of Duty, the Sinner then seems to be left in a most hopeless Condition, under a Sense of Guilt, without Assurance of Pardon. The Practice of sacrificing Beasts was anciently observed, with a View to give some Relief in this Particular. And if this were done as the Result of *Tradition*, originally founded in Appointment, with a Promise of Acceptance, in virtue of a future perfect Sacrifice; it then bears witness to our Argument for the Deficiency of *natural* Principles, and the Need of *Revelation*. But if it be considered as it obtained generally in the Heathen World, where the *Light* of such *Tradition* was lost, and with that the Knowledge of the Divine Acceptance, there was then no Comfort to be drawn from the Nature of the Thing itself, which (as a judicious Author has well expressed it) *rather suggested to them the Death which they deserved, than the Deliverance which they wanted*^b.

THE Life of *Religion* consists in the Hope and Expectation of the Divine Favour; and that Hope of course must fail and languish, unless it be supported by Divine Promise. A Man must know nothing of himself, who sees not the Worthlessness of all his Services, and how impossible it is that any of them should make real Reparation for his manifold Offences. And whether God will accept of any thing that we can do, which is so plainly insufficient, or of any other Satisfaction to be made in our stead, there is need of the *Light of Revelation* to assure us; there being no Conclusions, from the Nature of the Thing, whereon to ground with Certainty. If then it imports us greatly to be satisfied, in a Matter of such near and intimate Concern to us, and no such Satisfaction can be found in unassisted Reason, can we ask a clearer Instance of the Defect of *natural Light*, and its Inability to promote the Ends and Purposes of true *Religion*? And if upon farther Enquiry it should be found, that there is a *Revelation* which supplies this Defect, which assures us that God is ready to pardon and be reconciled, and has himself provided an effectual Method for this Purpose, in accepting of the Sacrifice of *Christ* as a full Ransom for Sin, upon Condition only of our own Repentance, with an humble Trust and Confidence in his Merits; ought we not greatly to rejoice in this stupendous Method of Salvation, and thankfully endeavour to qualify ourselves for receiving the Privileges of it? Shall we not be most inexcusable, if we still pretend to maintain the Sufficiency of *natural Light*, and despise the Means which, as God has appointed them, can never fail us?

4. *Fourthly*, The last Instance which I proposed to lay before you of the Defect of *natural Light*, was to be taken from the Motives and Inducements to Obedience. In proportion as our Duty itself were more obscure and uncertain, the Reasons for observing it must of course be less apparent. But neither would the Knowledge of Duty (though clear and intelligible) be sufficient to preserve a regular Obedience, except some Considerations of personal Convenience were added to enforce it. And this must arise either from the Prospect of some Benefits designed

^a The Author of *Christianity as old as the Creation* (p. 390, &c.) labours much to prove this *certain* from Principles of Reason. And though we cannot but confess it agreeable to Reason, when *revealed*, that Repentance should entitle us to the Benefit of the great Atonement, yet without such *Revelation* we could not have received it with the same Assurance. Much less can it be argued, either from Reason or Scripture, that Repentance without Atonement should entitle us to Pardon.

^b Dr. Conybeare's Sermon of the Expediency of Revelation, p. 6.

Berriman.
Sermon
II.

designed for its Reward, or from the escaping of such Penalties as are due to Transgression, or yet more powerfully from the Combination or Conjunction of both these together.

Now since it is evident, from plain Experience, that the present Oeconomy of Providence does not with an even and constant Hand dispense forth such Rewards and Penalties, it remains, that either a future State must be supposed for the adjusting of these present Inequalities, or else our Duty will be but feebly enforced, and want its most powerful Inducements. I admit it from hence to be a rational Conclusion, that there will be such a future State of Rewards and Punishments. But had we no other Proof of that Conclusion, besides what arises from this sole Consideration, that the present State of Things requires it, in order to the full Vindication of the Divine Honour; I fear our Persuasion would be doubtful and wavering at best, and little able to support a constant and uniform Behaviour. The Hurry and Impetus of sensual Appetites, which are so hardly restrained under the clearest Convictions, would go nigh to give up the Honour of the Divine Attributes, rather than suffer a Controll from Principles that are no otherwise supported. It has been often observed by others, of the finest Moralists among the Heathens, though they had much Light from Tradition and ancient Books to help their Disquisitions, yet when they come to speak of the Soul's Immortality, with what Diffidence they expressed their Belief of it, as a Point which they seem rather to have wished might be true, than pretended to affirm with any Certainty. And if the Men of Thought and Application were so much in the dark, how should they persuade the unstable and unthinking Multitude to a steady Belief of those Points whereof they doubted themselves? how should they be convinced of the Certainty of this Doctrine, whose Engagements in secular Affairs took off much of their Attention to nicer Speculations, or more vehemently addicted them to sensual Pursuits? Whilst then the Sanctions of the Law, which are the strongest Motives to Obedience, continued in such Darkness and Obscurity, the Rules of Religion must lose much of their Weight; and, in order to the clearing up of one for the Enforcement of the other, there must be need of some higher Principle than *natural Light*, which is plainly insufficient.

HAVING thus laid before you, in some obvious Instances, the Weakness and Imperfection of our own Faculties, their utter Inability to give us solid Satisfaction in Matters of Religion, or instruct us with a proper Knowledge of the Nature of God, and of the Measures of our Duty towards Him, if left to their native unassisted Strength, without any Direction or Help from a superior Guide; it will be easy after all this, in the

II. SECOND Place, to collect from hence the great Need Mankind stood in of *Revelation*, of some stated Scheme of *Religion* to be given by God, in order to beget an assured Hope and Expectation of his Favour.

IF the Strength of our own Minds be plainly insufficient, let us see what other Help can be devised or contrived, to direct or guide us in this wretched Obscurity? Will the Wisdom or Authority of other Men be a competent Succour to our own Frailty and Weakness? But the Matter has been shewn already to exceed the Reach of human Faculties: And, therefore, whatever Deference may be allowed to Persons of superior Abilities, as to those Cases which fall within the proper Reach and Compass of their Observation; yet in this Case their Researches being fallible and uncertain as our own, the Assertions, in which they should pretend to acquiesce, could be no real Security against Mistake, nor give us any solid Satisfaction. A Man who studies Mathematicks, may deserve Credit in what he advances concerning Numbers and Proportions, even from those who are not capable of examining the Truth of his Assertions: But if he should pretend to tell us what is doing at this Instant in *Muscovy* or *China*, or any other distant Place, we should not think ourselves obliged to believe him at his own Word, without Proof of some superior Knowledge communicated to him, beyond what the Creator has seen fit to bestow on other Men. It is so in Matters

of Religion: There are some Points in which human Reason either cannot see at all, or not without great Doubt and Uncertainty; and in relation to them, whatever any other Man shall maintain upon the Force of his own Reason, will still continue to be doubtful and uncertain; unless we can suppose that his Conclusions should be clearer and better founded than the Principles themselves from which he concludes. Or if some few should be supposed to have argued rightly from the Reasons and Relations of Things, yet their Authority could be pressed no farther than the Reasonableness of their Assertions appeared; and consequently the Bulk of Mankind, whose Faculties were too gross to perceive, or their Attention too backward to go through such Disquisitions, would still be at a loss where to fix their Foot, or find a certain Rule of Faith and Actions.

Berriman.
Sermon
II.

SHALL we then, in the next Place, have recourse to Tradition, and judge it safer to depend on the Wisdom and Experience of former Times? But then, when we have traced such Tradition to its Source and Origin, the Question plainly recurs, Whether the Persons from whom it was originally derived did collect the Matter, as the Result of their own Reason, by the meer Strength of *natural* Abilities? or whether they received it by the supernatural Assistance of *Divine Revelation*, to enforce the Credit of their Testimony, and add Weight and Evidence to their Authority? If the first should be the Case, there is no Ground to suppose that the Faculties of Men in former Times were so much clearer than those of the present Generation, as to qualify them for those Disquisitions in Matters of Religion, which have been shewn to be above the Reach of human Penetration. And if it be answered, on the other hand, That they had the supernatural Assistance of Divine Illumination, we have then the very Thing admitted which is the Point in Question; we have the Gift of *Prophecy* allowed, to assist the Weakness of human Knowledge, and instruct us in those sacred and important Truths, to the Understanding and Discovery whereof no Endeavours or Enquiry of our own could have otherwise availed us. So that there seems to be no *Medium* between resting on the incompetent Authority of *human Reason*, and admitting the Need there is of *Divine Revelation*, to prevent a State of endless Scepticism; which, by doubting of every thing, must utterly destroy the Influences of Religion, and cast us into the wildest Confusion.

IN answer to all this it will probably be urged, That the *Revelation* which we boast of so much, as the only Expedient to preserve a Sense of Religion, and govern our Behaviour, has appeared by Experience, which is the surest Argument, to be as insufficient for these Purposes as a State of Nature^c itself. For, where have the Duties of *Morality*, which *Revealed Religion* should assert and establish, been more grossly and habitually violated, than by the Professors of *Christianity*? Can it be pretended, that the World is made better by the Conversion of so many Nations to the Christian Faith? Is it not apparent, beyond all Contradiction, that Murder and Oppression, and all sorts of Lewdness, are practised among *Christians* with as much Frequency, and as little Regret, as they can ever be pretended to have been in any civilized Nations of the *Heathen* World? And even among those that have affected a Shew of greater Sanctity, has it not often been discovered, that secret Opportunities have been greedily embraced to perpetrate the greatest Villanies, whilst the outward Appearance of Piety has only served for a Pretence to screen their Reputation, and guard them against any Suspicion, that so they might be enabled to execute their Designs with more Security?

BUT this Objection can be of no Weight against the Main of our Argument; because it plainly mistakes the Name or external Profession, for *Christianity* or *Religion* itself. We insist, that the *Christian Religion* does, in its own Nature, evidently tend to preserve the Faculties of the Mind in a proper Order and Regimen, to improve our Understanding with clearer and juster Notions of Things, to regulate the Affections, and bring them in Subjection to Reason. We are able to shew this under the several Heads of *moral Duty*; and we defy our Adversaries,

VOL. III.

(7 P)

versaries,

^c See *Christianity as old as the Creation*, p. 404, &c.

Berriman.
Sermon
II.

versaries, with all their Sophistry and Malice, to disprove it. But then we acknowledge, that, in order to attain these Effects, that *Religion* must be inwardly received, as well as outwardly professed. It presses none into its Service, but leaves them to their own Choice, whether or no they will accept of its Proposals. We trust we have illustrious Examples of its Power and Efficacy, too many to be numbered, too clear to be eluded, and too well known to admit of any Dispute: And if there are sad Examples, on the other hand, of many among those who call themselves *Christians*, and yet *run into the same Excess of Riot with the Gentiles, that know not God*; it is indeed a Matter much to be lamented, that the Corruption of human Nature should be so strong and prevalent; but it argues only, that they have not received that *Religion*, as they ought, into their Hearts, as the proper Principle to controul and govern their Affections. When Men are not in earnest in those Professions which they make of *Religion*, there can be little Wonder, if its Influence upon their Manners should be weak and insignificant. And what Exception can it be to the Truth of such *Religion*, if it does not force Men to be sincere and active in its Interest?

AND yet, whatever Exceptions may be made to the Behaviour of particular Persons, we are bold to say, that the Precepts of *Morality*, as professed and inculcated among the Body of *Christians*, are much superior to those of Heathen *Moralists*^d, who admitted of some Practices too shocking to be thought of without Horror under Gospel Light. And after all, as for those Gentlemen who are so earnest in persuading us to give up *Christianity*, what have they to offer in its room? what better Expedient for the Security of *moral Virtue*? If we judge by the Experience we have in such as appear fondest of their Notions, that gives but little Encouragement to look for the Improvement of *Virtue* by the Propagation of their Sentiments. Such Zeal against *Christianity*, if it proceeds not (as without doubt it often does) from sensual Motives, and the grosser kind of Immoralities, can hardly be acquitted from the Charge of Pride and Vain-glory, and a criminal Ambition to make themselves considerable, by the Ostentation of their Parts and Abilities. For if *Nature* itself is plainly insufficient to answer the Purposes and Ends of *Religion*, and that *Divine Revelation*, which alone appears equal to those Purposes, does nevertheless meet with Disesteem and Opposition; from whence should this proceed but from the Contrariety of Mens Minds, and their utter Aversion, in some respect or other, from the Impressions of real Piety? But this will more fully appear under the

III. THIRD Head of Discourse, where I proposed to assert the Reasonableness of receiving that System of *Religion* which is revealed in Scripture, as being every way qualified to give us the most sure and solid Satisfaction.

I CONSIDER here the Doctrine of the Scriptures as one entire System of *Religion*, from Beginning to End; so that however the different Dispensations may be sometimes set in Contradistinction to each other, as differing in the Method of Oeconomy and outward Regiment, yet the Whole may be considered together in Agreement, as to the one grand Point in View, and that is, the Salvation of Mankind by Christ.

I NEED not here undertake the Defence of our Religion, as no way contradictory to *natural Light*, neither requiring the Belief of what appears to be false, nor enjoining the Violation of any moral Duty. It will lie upon our Adversaries to object some Instance of this kind: And when they have stated their Objection, it will be time enough to look into the Weight and Importance of it. In the mean time, it may suffice to refer to those who have already stated the Principles of *Revealed Religion*, and shewn how they improve the Doctrines and Principles of Reason, and advance them to the greatest Perfection. So that if *natural Light* be plainly an imperfect Guide, and the *Revelation* we alledge appears duly qualified to supply its Defects, it will then be difficult for its Adversaries to maintain the Grounds of their rejecting it, unless they could point us out some other Director which might render it unnecessary. But since nothing

^d See Jenkins's Reasonableness of the Christian Religion, Vol. I. par. 3. cap. 4.

thing of this kind is produced, we shall not hastily give ear to those who would rob us of our greatest Comfort, without substituting any other in its room.

Berriman.
Sermon
II.

THERE is one Particular, indeed, in which the Patrons of Infidelity have of late endeavoured to convict our Religion of Falshood and Error, and thereby to overthrow the Foundation of our Faith. They very rightly observe, that Christ and his Apostles do undertake to establish themselves upon the old Foundation, and maintain Christ to be that Saviour who had been anciently foretold, and promised to the Faithful in all former Ages*. But then they insinuate, that this Point is more than can ever be made good, because it is impossible to shew, by *Rules of Grammar and Criticism*, that there is any such Meaning in the ancient Scriptures, any real Ground or Foundation for such Expectances. They suggest, that the Belief of a *Messiah* was a novel Conceit among the *Jews*†, invented not long before the Age of *Jesus*, altogether unsupported by any plain or literal Predictions, and destitute of any other Countenance, besides what it receives from Men of later Times, who have indulged their Fancy to find out mystical and figurative Interpretations, widely distant from the original Design of the Scripture, and never thought of till, heated with this new Prejudice, the Expositors were industrious in wresting every thing to look towards it. They go on to observe, that this Belief of a *Messiah*, ill supported as it is, was a quite different Thing from the *Christian* Doctrine; it was the Expectation of a temporal Deliverer, to rescue the Sons of *Abraham* from Bondage and Oppression, and establish a flourishing Empire and Dominion over them.

As to this latter Observation, it will need but little Pains to give it Satisfaction; since, if our Doctrine can be shewn to be contained in the Scriptures themselves, it can but little concern us how the *Jews*, through Partiality and national Prejudice, had misrepresented it, confining spiritual Promises to earthly Enjoyments, and limiting the Blessing of universal Redemption to the Deliverances of their own People. It will be easy in this Case to distinguish what we may call the radical or fundamental Matter of their Hope, from the vain Superstructure of their own Fancies. Their Notion of a *Messiah* may confirm our Interpretation of the Scripture Prophecies, and serve for a substantial Argument on the Side of *Christianity*; and yet the carnal Conceits which they had mixed with it, may be reasonably referred to the Grossness of their Apprehension, and their Disrelish of all but sensual Satisfaction.

MEAN while it seems extraordinary, that our Adversaries should censure this Doctrine of the ancient *Jews*, as destitute of all Support but what is mystical and figurative; and yet at the same time ascribe to them those Expectations of a temporal Kingdom, which were manifestly founded on the literal Interpretation, and adhering rather to the Sound, than to the Sense of the prophetic Descriptions. They should either be acquitted from the Charge of *Allegory* in this Instance, or else their Opinion should be reckoned nearer to the *Christian*, concerning the spiritual Reign and Offices of the *Messiah*.

WITH respect to that other Part of the Objection, in which the *Christians* are principally meant to be attacked, our Adversaries are certainly unreasonable in requiring us to shew, meerly from the *Use of Language*, and the *Rules of Grammar and Criticism*, that the *Christian* Sense of the Prophecies must needs be the true one, and ought to be received upon the score of its native and intrinsic Evidence. For though this might be shewn with the utmost Probability of divers of them, yet it is more than our Adversaries have Right to claim or demand of us; it being enough if we are able, by any Medium whatever, to evince, that the Exposition which we give contains the true and genuine Import of the Prophecy. Now, besides the common Usage of Speech, and express Import of Words, there is another Way of arguing from *Authority*; and, in proportion as that *Authority* is competent and unexceptionable, the Argument from it, for settling the Meaning of such Passages as might otherwise be doubtful, will be clear and conclusive. Suppose then we should not, by a bare Consideration of the

* Grounds and Reasons of the Christian Religion, Par. I. cap. 2. † Scheme of Literal Prophecy, Cap. 1, 3.

Berriman.
Sermon
II.

the Text of the Old Testament, be able to defend the Christian Interpretation, so as to set it above the Reach of Contradiction; yet, if they who did anciently interpret it in such Manner, have given the most evident Proofs that God was with them, and has, by unquestionable Miracles, set his Seal to it, this Proof of a Divine Attestation will abundantly establish the Sense in Question, and evince it to be the real and genuine Meaning of the Scripture.

SUCH therefore is the Evidence which Christ and his Apostles have given of the Truth of their Doctrine, and consequently of its having been contained and foretold in the Writings of the Old Testament. This Evidence has been often stated and defended by very able Hands: And to overthrow such Evidence as this no Argument can be sufficient, but a direct and certain Demonstration of the Impossibility of such Meaning, that it contains a Repugnancy to some Truth, of which we are as well assured as we can ever be of such Evidence itself. For if nothing appears but that the Meaning may possibly be true, and we have withal such ample Attestation that it is, this must be admitted a full and a convincing Evidence, and such as ought to be received without Doubt or Hesitation. And if, besides this, there should be a Concurrence of other Circumstances, to give Light and Countenance to such Interpretation, it must then be most unreasonable to reject it for this sole Consideration, because, perhaps, a bare Inspection of the Passage might suggest another Meaning, or would not necessarily have required this; for that would be to rest the Matter on one Method of Enquiry, and that extremely precarious, and liable to great Uncertainty.

IT shall then be my Endeavour to propose the *Christian* Scheme, or the Doctrine of one certain Person of human Race to be the Saviour of Mankind from Sin and Punishment, as it appears in the Books of the Old Testament, as the Substance of it was originally delivered to our first Parents in *Paradise*, and the more explicit Knowledge of it was gradually unfolded through the succeeding Periods of Time, as the Exigences of the Church or the State of Things seemed to require, or to minister Occasion. And if, after such Survey, it shall appear that the *Christian* Doctrine offers no Violence to the ancient Scriptures, when it ascribes such View and Meaning to them, but explains them in a Sense which is not only possible, but withal is highly reasonable, and every way worthy of God; then in proportion as the other Evidences for *Christianity* are clear and certain, this also of *Prophecy* will be established by them, and confirm the Authority of that Religion by which itself is authorized. The setting of this Matter in a proper Light, I intend for the Subject of some ensuing Discourses.

Now to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be all Honour, &c.

S E R.

SERMON III.

The Knowledge of the Gospel, in the first Ages of the World.

Preached, *March* the 2d, 1729-30.

The First SERMON on this TEXT.

HEB. i. 1, 2.

God, who at sundry Times, and in divers Manners, spake in Time past unto the Fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last Days spoken unto us by his Son.

I HAD proposed to lay before you a Plan of the *Christian Scheme*, as it was originally delivered to our first Parents in Paradise, and gradually unfolded through the succeeding Periods of Time, till at last it was displayed with the clearest and most radiant Lustre upon Christ's Manifestation in the Flesh, to bring *Life and Immortality to Light*. In entering on which Subject, we cannot have a fairer Handle than what is suggested by these Words of the Epistle to the *Hebrews*; where the ancient Oeconomies of Providence, with regard to Religion, are intimated to have varied or differed from each other, as well in respect of the Method of dispensing them, as of the Periods of Time in which they were dispensed; but yet all to have kept the same grand End in View, which was at last more fully declared and manifested by the Son of God.

THE *Manners* in which God *spake in Time past unto the Fathers by the Prophets*, are said to have been *divers*; which may, perhaps, have Reference to those different Methods in which God was pleased of old to communicate or impart his *Revelations*, whether by Dreams and Visions, or familiar Converse, or by secret Inspiration; but will, no doubt, be very justly extended to take in the different Import of those *Revelations* themselves, whether delivered in naked and express Terms, or conveyed under the Cover of symbolical, figurative, or typical Representations. The Authority of both, no doubt, is equal, so far as their Meaning appears, or is intelligible; for if both were alike imparted by Divine *Revelation*, and appear to have been intended in our Sense of them, whether literal, or not, then they must both have the same, *i. e.* the Divine Authority to establish and support them, and will be alike capable of inferring those Conclusions that are argued from them. So that in stating of this Matter, I shall chuse to join together the literal and the typical Predictions, as aptly corresponding with each other, and alike tending to display the Harmony and Consistency of the Gospel Scheme, as taught from the Beginning, and always designed by the Divine Wisdom for the only Method of Salvation.

Berriman.
Sermon
III.

IT is evident to those who are conversant in ancient Writings, that it has been the Practice of other Nations, as well as of the *Jews*, to deliver their Instructions under the Cover of Emblems and figurative Characters. And if the Meaning of such Characters be not always so demonstrable as to cut off all Ground of Cavil and Exception, yet there are usually such Circumstances as may suffice to point out the general Design, and set it beyond all reasonable Doubt to every fair and dispassionate Inquirer. Thus for the Purpose in the Old Testament, if it appears suitable to the Genius of the *Jewish* Writings to have future Things shadowed out by Types and emblematical Prefigurations; if, in assigning the Interpretation of such Types, we propose no other than a rational and consistent Scheme of Religion, such as contradicts no Part of the Divine Oeconomy, but is plainly answerable to the ancient Hopes of faithful Men, fulfilled by a correspondent Accomplishment in the Event of Things, and confirmed by other Passages that are delivered in more naked and express Terms; there is then no internal Evidence to be produced against this Argument from ancient Types, but a great deal of Reason to acknowledge its Conclusiveness, when once their Meaning is thus fixed and ascertained by the Coincidence of other Matters. And though we have no need, on one hand, to rest the whole Merits of the Cause on this kind of Reasoning, yet neither have we any, on the other hand, to give it up as inconclusive.

IT is, therefore, a very wild and fallacious Attempt of a late Writer^a, to set the Evidence of the Gospel meerly upon this Foot; and, because its first Preachers have sometimes argued from typical and allegorical Predictions, to conclude from thence, that our Religion has no other Evidence but what is *allegorical*, and is utterly destitute of all direct and *literal* Support. That Scheme was manifestly calculated to subvert and overthrow what it would seem to establish; that when we are first persuaded to look for nothing else but *Allegory*, it might next be shewn that that *Allegory*^b itself is without all real Foundation, and could never be designed in the original View and Import of the Prophecy. But I trust it may be shewn, that both Parts of the Scheme have failed: On one hand, that we have other Evidence which is direct and *literal*, and delivered in Terms too full and express to be eluded; on the other hand, that even that which is drawn from *Allegory* may, by a serious Attention to the Genius and Drift of Scripture, arise to a rational Degree of Evidence, and has moreover been confirmed by a Divine Attestation accompanying the first Preachers of the Gospel, and giving Sanction to their Doctrine by innumerable Miracles.

OUR Adversaries, indeed, have endeavoured to throw out the Evidence of *Miracles*^c in this Case, as altogether impertinent; and alledge, that if the ancient *Prophecies* had really no such Meaning in them as the New Testament ascribes to them, no subsequent *Miracles* can ever prove they had. And this Allegation is indeed true; but foreign to the Purpose: Since the Question plainly is not, Whether Miracles may prove that Exposition to be true, which was originally false, (a Position which no one ever asserted; so that all the Pains which has been taken to disprove it, has been no other than disputing without an Adversary;) but, Whether that Exposition, whose Truth had otherwise been less apparent, may not be cleared up, supported, and enforced, by the Evidence of Miracles. In this View it is an Argument of great Importance, and level to the meanest Capacities: It throws Light upon those Truths which were originally more obscure; and sets that which might otherwise be disputable, above the reach of Contradiction. So that, taking the whole Proof together, we have the strongest Reasons for embracing *Christianity*, and such as must render Infidelity without Excuse.

AND as the ancient Predictions and Notifications of the *Messiah* were dispensed in divers Manners, so also are they said to have been delivered at sundry Times, or (as the Word *πολυμερῶς* may rather signify) in many distinct Parts or Portions: Which refers to the gradual opening of the Divine Oeconomy through the successive

^a Grounds and Reasons, Par. I. chap. 8, §c.

^b Scheme of Literal Prophecy, Chap. 1, 3.

^c Grounds and Reasons, Par. I. chap. 7.

cessive Periods of Time, explaining more and more the Doctrine of Redemption, as that *Fulness of Time* advanced nearer on, in which God had determined to reveal his Gospel in the clearest Terms, and *Speak unto us by his Son*. This imports, that the Whole of our Religion was not immediately discovered, and at one View, but in such Measure and Proportion, as was fit to keep up in fallen Men an Hope of the Divine Mercy, a lively Assurance of Pardon and Reconciliation.

Berriman.
Sermon
III.

NOR was it necessary that the Persons to whom these Oracles were delivered, should be able to perceive the whole Compass and Import of every Prediction which was given to them. If they saw enough to preserve the Sense of Religion alive and vigorous, it might be left to those of future Times, under stronger Light and Advantages, to discern the further Import of the same Prophecies, when either explained over again by new ones, or accomplished in the Event of Things. It is therefore allowed, that the holy Men of former Times did not perceive the whole Beauty of that Divine Oeconomy which has been revealed in the *Fulness of Time*: It is allowed, that they were sensible of some latent Mystery contained in their own Oracles, beyond what they were able to explain; which served as a continual Spur to excite their Zeal and Application, and made them long and labour for a further Discovery. It is for this Reason, that the Gospel, as now preached throughout the World, is termed the *Mystery* that had been hid from Ages, and from Generations. It was said by Christ to his Disciples, that many Prophets, and Kings, and righteous Men, had desired to see these Things which they saw, and had not seen them. And it is remarked by St. Peter of the ancient Prophets, who prophesied of the Grace of the Gospel, that they did enquire and search diligently into the Nature and Purport of that Salvation, searching what, or what Manner of Time, the Spirit of Christ, which was in them, did signify, when it testified beforehand the Sufferings of Christ, and the Glory that should follow. But after all their Searches, they only learned, that a less Measure of Knowledge ought to satisfy them; for it was revealed unto them, that not unto themselves, but unto us, they did minister the Things which are now reported unto you, by them that have preached the Gospel unto you, with the more abundant Illumination of the Holy Ghost sent down from Heaven, declaring such stupendous and unfathomable Mysteries as the very Angels desire to look into, but cannot penetrate. Now, where is the Absurdity or Inconsistency of such a Supposition, that the ancient Oracles, though so far understood as to serve the Purposes of Religion through the several Periods or Intervals of Time, yet were not understood in all that Latitude and Compass which God had been pleased, by succeeding Revelations, to lay open and disclose, notwithstanding they had all the same End in View from the Beginning, and were conducted with such Harmony and Correspondence, as mutually to give Light and Confirmation to each other?

Col. i. 26.
Mat. xiii.
17.
Luke x.
24.

1 Pet. i.
10, &c.

LET us then trace the Communications of Gospel Light from the earliest Ages, that we may see by what Degrees the Doctrine of Salvation was made known unto Men; how far they understood the Notices which were delivered to them, and how much of the Doctrine contained in their own Oracles was left to be cleared up by future Revelation; at the same time making a Discovery of new Circumstances relating to this great Event, and giving further Illustration to the old ones.

Now, there are two principal Divisions of Time before the Coming of Christ, in which the State of Prophecy was very different; namely, *before* and *after* the Vocation of Abraham. In the first, Mankind were considered indiscriminately, and without Regard to any distinct Family or Nation; for though the Line of the Messiah was several times restrained, yet it was without any distinct Discipline to prepare one Nation above another to receive him. In the latter, the Promises were made to the Posterity of Abraham, as a distinct Body or People, though not without very clear and express Intimations, that the Benefit of them should reach to other Nations, and not vacate the original Covenant made with human Race. It shall therefore be our Business to consider these Periods distinctly, and, under the latter, more especially to observe with what Gradation of

of

Berriman.
Sermon
III.

of Prophecy this great Oeconomy was opened, and the *Messiah*, under various Marks and Characters, described, either as the *Son of Abraham* or *Son of David*.

IN the former of these Periods, which continues for the Space of two thousand Years, and more, we have but little Remains of God's Dealing and Correspondence with Mankind; and in what we have, the Notices of this great Event are very general and concise, but such as suit well with the gradual Revelation of so great a Mystery, and are no way inconsistent with the more particular Discoveries of after-times. The original Declaration of God's Will and Purpose, in this respect, was made immediately upon the Fall, when, as soon as our first Parents had been injured by the *Serpent's* Subtilty, God denounced his Judgments upon all the Parties concerned in the Offence; but, in the *midst of Judgment*, was pleased to *remember Mercy* towards fallen Man, and increase his Vengeance on the *Serpent's* Head by the Method used for Man's Recovery. As the Sentence on the Man and the Woman was plainly calculated, by the ordinary Incidents of Life, to put them in mind of their Apostasy, whilst the one was doomed *to eat Bread in the Sweat of his Face*, and the other *to bring forth Children* with Pain and Sorrow; so was the *Serpent* doomed to such a State and Condition, to such abject Crawling on the Earth, such irreconcilable *Enmity* and Antipathy towards Men, as might serve for a constant Memorial of that sad Catastrophe. *Because thou hast done this* (says God) *thou art cursed above all Cattle, and above every Beast of the Field: Upon thy Belly shalt thou go, and Dust shalt thou eat all the Days of thy Life. And I will put Enmity between thee and the Woman, and between thy Seed and her Seed: It (or rather he) shall bruise thy Head, and thou shalt bruise his Heel.*

BUT though this literal Acceptation has its Use^d, yet the Occasion must appear too great and solemn, not to suggest some higher View than this; and therefore it has been usual in the Church to understand this Sentence, which was passed upon a brute Creature, in Right of God's Dominion over the Works of his Hands, and, as such, could not properly be penal, to have a further and symbolical Design, relating to Events of much higher Importance and Concern. It is acknowledged, that the *Christian* Exposition contains more than can be necessarily argued from the Words themselves, and requires some further Light to establish and support it. Mean while, there is plainly nothing in the *Christian* Exposition inconsistent with the Terms in which that *Prophecy* is delivered, or with any Principle of *natural Light*, or with any other *Revelation*. So that if it should appear to be supported by Authority, or other proper Evidence, it ought then to be admitted as the true Exposition, there being nothing to be pleaded in Bar to such an Evidence.

THAT there should spring up one in after-times, of the Posterity of that Woman who had been seduced, one who, as the Head and Captain of a chosen Generation, should engage in a State of Warfare with the Devil and his Followers, and sustaining a slight Damage in the *suffering of Death*, should thereby *destroy him that had the Power of Death*, and repair the Injuries which he had done to human Race: This is the Purport of the *Christian* Exposition, which plainly contains in it nothing repugnant to the Tenor of the Words, and is most of all consistent with the succeeding Oracles, which threw in greater Light, and opened the Way more directly for the *Christian* Dispensation. So that, upon taking a View of the whole Scheme together, there will appear no reasonable Objection to be made to this Interpretation, no other to be offered with any shew of Probability.

How much of this Mystery was understood by our first Parents, or how far they were let into the Sense of this profound Oracle, we cannot certainly perceive, nor is it necessary that we should. But as the strictly literal Sense is manifestly too low, and not enough considerable, to be mistaken for the whole Intention and Design of it, so the frequent Intercourse which God was pleased to hold

^d Vid. Bochart. de Serpente Tentatore, inter Opera, Vol. I. p. 833, &c. Item Frischmuth. Paschius, & De Hase, in Vol. I. Thesaur. Theolog. Philolog. p. 55, &c.

hold with Men, and the Prophets which were raised up from time to time, and sent among them, might supply fuller Explications of what seemed to be obscure, and give them a farther Insight into the End and Purport of the Divine Counsels, than we are able to perceive at this Distance of Time, and with such short Notices as have been transmitted to us of those Matters. It might be necessary to have the Point cleared up to them by frequent and fuller Explications, lest the great Design of Religion should be lost or overlooked in such Obscurity. But it was not necessary that those Explications should be transmitted to us, because we have other Means abundantly sufficient for discovering the genuine Sense and Import of the Prophecy, and seeing, through a long Series of Predictions and Events, with the Advantage of greater Clearness and Perspicuity. As then it is not, on one hand, to be insisted, that our first Parents understood this Prophecy in all that Extent and Latitude in which it appears to us, by means of subsequent Revelations, which have farther opened the Meaning and Design of it; so neither is it, on the other hand, to be denied, but they might be favoured with such Explications as took off a great deal of its Obscurity, and gave them a clearer View of this important Doctrine, than the Words unexplained, or taken by themselves, could do.

Berriman.
Sermon
III.

THIS is a Presumption not unreasonable, if we consider, that the naked Letter would furnish out too low a Sense for so important an Occasion; and that withal the short Hints that remain with us of the religious Sentiments and Expectations of the earliest Ages, do plainly countenance and agree with that Interpretation of this ancient Prophecy, which is now received in the Christian Church, and contains a brief Recital or Summary of Gospel Truth. We will therefore enquire in what Sense the Words might be naturally taken by our first Parents; and then see whether the religious Notions which are found in the earliest Antiquity, be not most consistent and agreeable to such a Sense.

IT is not to be imagined, that they should take the Serpent which beguiled them, and in whose Malediction is contained this Promise of a Blessing to Mankind, to be no other than that brute Creature which they saw with their Eyes, incapable of sinning, and therefore no fit Subject of Punishment. They would much more reasonably suppose him to be actuated, or his Form usurped, by some invisible Power or evil Spirit, who would therefore be justly chargeable with the Crime of their Seduction, and liable to the Divine Vengeance upon that account. Though this, for want of Experience, might not appear to them at the Beginning of the Temptation, when the Delusiveness of his Suggestions enticed them to a criminal Compliance; yet, when they afterwards reflected on the whole Transaction, it could hardly fail occurring to their Observation. Consequently the Threatenings which are here denounced against the Serpent, though they have a literal Completion in the Condition and Properties of that Reptile, must yet be understood emblematically to denote something of a higher Concern; which bore, indeed, a fit Analogy and Proportion of Resemblance, but was better accommodated to the Nature of a spiritual and intelligent Being. *Because thou hast done this (says God) thou art cursed above all Cattle, and above every Beast of the Field.* This is the first Comfort to fallen Man, to see his Enemy, who thought to bring him in Subjection, and affected a Pre-eminence above all the Works of God, declared himself to be lower than the least of the Creation, and subject to extreme Malediction. Then follow some Particulars of his Curse, which contain (as was said) a plain Allusion to the State and Condition of the brutal Serpent, but must withal be resolved into an ænigmatical Representation of the Judgment executed on the real Tempter to this Apostasy. *Upon thy Belly shalt thou go; i. e.* In like manner as the Serpent, whose Form thou hast abused, is a low and groveling Animal, that crawls upon the Earth^e, so art thou destined to these earthly Regions, and shalt no more be

Gen. iii.
14.

VOL. III.

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able

* The Opinion of some (Pfeiffer. Opera, Vol. I. p. 14.) that the Serpent, before this, had Feet, and walked, is, I think, without sufficient Foundation. But the Opinion of De Hase (*De Serpente Seductore*, in Vol. I. of *Thesaur. Theol. Philol.*) that before this he carried his Head and Breast erect, and moved only by winding the lower

Berriman.
Sermon
III.

able to raise thy Head to those celestial Glories from which thou art cast down. *And Dust shalt thou eat all the Days of thy Life: i. e.* In like manner, as the Serpent, by reason of his abject Posture and crawling on the Earth, can eat his Food no otherwise than fouled and mixed with Dirt, and sometimes, in want of other Food, is forced, in Desert Places, to feed on Sand or Dust alone; ^f so shalt thou be able to devour and destroy only those among the Sons of Men, who shall be first defiled with thy Impurities; those Sons of Earth, and not of God, who shall addict themselves to sensual and earthly Satisfaction; whereas all the rest shall be rescued from thy Tyranny, as to their better Part; so that thou shalt have Power on their Body only, which is now made mortal by Sin; and as it was composed of Dust at the first, so shall it be reduced to Dust again. Nor is even this thy wretched Empire to be final and perpetual, but to last only *all the Days of thy Life*, during the Time that thou art permitted to live in these terrestrial Regions, and exert thy Power in the Children of Disobedience, until the Day come, that thou be sentenced to Death eternal, and restrained from any further Activity.

HERE is an Intimation of the final Vengeance which awaited him. But the Method of effecting it is farther unfolded in the Words that follow—*And I will put Enmity between thee and the Woman, and between thy Seed and her Seed: It (or he) shall bruise thy Head, and thou shalt bruise his Heel.* By the Seed of the Serpent, we understand all that *Seed of Evil Doers* (as the Prophet calls them) all those (whether among evil Spirits or the Race of Mankind, and these perhaps considered as combined under one Head or ^e Leader) who are guided by devilish Affections, and instigated by Principles of Pride and Malice. So wicked Men are elsewhere said to be a *Generation*, or *Seed of Vipers* [†], and to be *of their Father the Devil*, because *the Lusts of their Father they will do* ^{*}. In this Sense *Cain* is described in the New Testament, as being *of that wicked One*; and the *Tares* in the Parable are represented to have *sprung* from the *Seed* which was scatter'd *by the Enemy, i. e.* the Devil.

In Opposition to this *Seed of the Serpent* we find the *Seed of the Woman* mentioned; under which Character the whole Race of Mankind could not be intended, since many of them are included in the opposite Character of the Serpent's Seed, as being assimilated to him in Disposition. Besides that it is usual for the Race of fallen Men, and particularly such as do not recover from that Apostasy, to be denominated rather from the male Parent, and entitled the Children of *Adam*, rather than of *Eve*. So that the *Seed of the Woman* might probably be meant to denote a chosen and peculiar Part of Mankind, namely, such as should shake off the Yoke of this Deceiver, and so are fitly opposed to those who should submit to it, and are, on that account, reckoned for the Seed of the Serpent ^h. I say, the Character might thus be understood, collectively, of all the pious Descendants of our first Parents throughout future Ages. But if it should appear, moreover, that they were to be gathered under one Person as their Head or Chief, and considered as making up one Body in him, it would then be reasonable to understand this Character of Him more eminently than the rest, and look on him, in a peculiar Sense, as that promised *Seed of the Woman* which is here described.

To

lower Part of his Body, may seem to be countenanced by the Septuagint Reading of this Passage, *ἐπὶ τῆς κοιλίας σου καὶ τῆς κοιλίας αὐτοῦ*. Upon thy Breast and Belly shalt thou go; intimating, that before this he went on his Belly only, not on his Breast. And hence the vulgar Latin, *Super pectore*. It is thought by others, that the Tempter assumed the Form of a *fiery-flying Serpent*, a Creature of great Brightness and Splendor, and elsewhere call'd a *Seraph*, which is the Name of one of the highest Orders of Angels; probably because they had anciently appeared, in that Form. See Dr. Jenkins's *Reasonableness of the Christian Religion*, Vol. II. p. 246.

^f Vid. Bochart. Hierozo. l. 1. c. 4. Et de Serpente tentatore, Vol. 1. p. 844. Item Calmet Dictionaire in voc. Serpent.

^e The Targum of Onkelos has expressed it in the Singular, *בין בנך ובין בנהא* Between thy Son and her Son. Accordingly, some have understood *Antichrist* to be that single Person more eminently styled the *Seed of the Serpent*. Vid. Paul. Fag. in loc.

^h Vid. De Hase Dissert. de Serpente Seducatore, in Thesaur. Theol. Philol. Vol. I. p. 81. c. 5. § 10.

To incline to such Interpretation, it might be observed, that this Seed is spoken of in the singular Number as one illustrious Person; ¹ *He shall bruise thy Head, and thou shalt bruise his Heel*: And accordingly the Seventy have retained the personal Pronoun ^k in the Translation of this Sentence. Besides which it might be argued, if our first Parents, in their State of Integrity, were found too frail and feeble to withstand the Serpent's Subtilty, it could scarce be any common Privilege of their Descendants, in this lapsed Estate, to conquer and subdue him by their own Strength or Policy, but that Work will require some one, at least among them, endued with an extraordinary Power from on high. To all which, when it is added, that the divine Intercourse with Men might instruct the earliest Ages with clearer Explications of this great Truth, than were necessary to be left upon Record to after-times, which were to have other Methods of Instruction; and that the short Notices which are transmitted to us of the religious Sentiments of those Ages, do argue an Expectation of some great Deliverer, there can be little Room to doubt but the *Seed of the Woman*, in this Prediction, should be that extraordinary Person they expected, and that their Expectation itself was grounded upon this Prediction.

THE Manner of his Victory, agreeably to the foregoing Character, is described under a manifest Allusion to the brutal Serpent, *He shall bruise thy Head, and thou shalt bruise his Heel*. As it is usual with that venomous Animal to wound Men in the Heel, or lower Part of the Body, as being nearest and best within his Reach; so was the *Seed of the Woman* to suffer from the *old Serpent*, but only in his inferior and less noble Part; which is easily understood to be the Body, as less valuable than the Soul, and now made subject to Death, through the Craft and Subtilty of the Deceiver. And so we see how the Devil might have some Appearance of Advantage against Christ for a while, (enough to answer this Description of *bruising his Heel*) without supposing that compleat Victory and Triumph over him, which is the Absurdity to which our Adversaries aim to drive us¹. On the other hand, if Men, when they would slay a *Serpent*, direct their Stroke at his *Head*, at once to disarm him of his Venom, and take away his Life, to crush and bruise him in the principal and most vital Part: In like manner should the *Seed of the Woman* destroy the Power of this grand Impostor, and stop the farther Progress of his Malice, not by a slight Opposition to divert his Rage, but by an effectual Conquest and utter Overthrow: What mighty Comfort was administered to Mankind by this Sentence of Judgment denounced against their Enemy? How was the Injury they had receiv'd alleviated and mollified, by being declared to affect only the more ignoble Part of their Composition, and that but for a Time, provided they took care to combine in that Body, and under that Head, which is here denominated the *Seed of the Woman*, and set in Opposition to the *Serpent* and his *Seed*? How, lastly, were they fortified against the Fear of future Harms, and animated in their Conflicts with this Deceiver, by so full an Assurance of Victory and Conquest over him?

THE *Jewish Targums*,^m I confess, have explained this last Clause of the Prediction somewhat differently; but still they refer it to the Opposition there should be between the *Serpent* and the *Messiah*, and so do in the main confirm and strengthen the *Christian Exposition*, as agreeable to the antient Doctrine and Tradition of the *Jewish Church*. But the Observation I would choose to make

¹ See *Shuckford's Connexion*, Vol. I. p. 286.

^k *Αὐτός*, which cannot grammatically refer to *οὐρίμα*, but to the Person meant under that Character.

^l Scheme of Literal Prophecy, ch. vi.

^m The Targum of Onkelos has the Sentence thus: *I will put Enmity between thee and the Woman, and between thy Son and her Son: He shall remember to thee what thou hast done to him from the Beginning, and thou shalt watch for him to the End*. The Targum ascribed to Jonathan is more express: *But I will put Enmity between thee and the Woman, between the Seed of thy Son, and the Seed of her Sons: And it shall be when the Sons of the Woman keep the Precepts of the Law, they shall prepare to smite thee on the Head; but when they forsake the Precepts of the Law, then thou shalt be in Readiness to bite them by the Heel. Yet they shall have a Remedy, but thou shalt have no Remedy; for they shall apply a Medicine to their Heel in the Days of King Messiah*. The Jerusalem Targum is much the same with Jonathan, save that the smiting of the Serpent's Head, is explained to extend to killing him, and the biting the Heel of the Seed of the Woman, only to hurting them; and the Remedy for that Hurt is thus farther explained: *But they shall provide Medicine for one another in the Heel, i. e. in the End, the Heel of the Days, namely, in the Days of King Messiah*.

Berriman.
Sermon
III.

make at present, is, that something of this kind our first Parents would be apt to gather from the Terms of the Prediction itself, the bare Letter whereof could never satisfy without a mystical Interpretation; nor could any more natural than this be given of it. As then there must be something of this Notion conceiv'd from the Beginning, (tho' not with all that Lustre and Advantage in which we now perceive it;) so we have Reason to believe it might be cultivated and improved by *Enoch*, and other holy Men of old, who being endued with the Spirit of Prophecy, would be most probably enlighten'd with such Knowledge of this important Doctrine, as was proper for the Age and Condition of the People among whom they lived. What they deliver'd of this kind, tho' greatly for the Use and Improvement of the Church in their Time, the Holy Ghost has not thought it needful to transmit unto us, because we have other and clearer Means of Knowledge; and whilst we enjoy a more abundant Light, can have no Ground to complain of the Removal of such as was comparatively faint and glimmering. However, from the short Hints which do remain of the Notions and Sentiments of those Times, we may collect a reasonable Confirmation of that Sense which has been given of this antient Prophecy, and of its being so explain'd and understood by pious Men from the Beginning. The Stating of which Matter, under several Instances, will be made the Subject of another Discourse.

Now to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be all Honour, &c.

S E R.

S E R M O N IV.

The Knowledge of the Gospel, in the first Ages of the World.

Preached, *April* the 6th, 1730.

The Second S E R M O N on this T E X T.

H E B. i. 1, 2.

God, who at sundry Times, and in divers Manners, spake in Time past unto the Fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last Days spoken unto us by his Son.

IN shewing the gradual Discovery which has been made of the Mystery of our Redemption, partly by exprefs and literal Predictions, and partly by such as are symbolical and figurative, it was necessary to begin with that original Promise made to our first Parents in *Paradise*, which, under an Allusion to the State and Condition of the brutal *Serpent*, engages for such Reparation of the Damages sustain'd by the Fall, that all who should attempt to throw off the Yoke of this Deceiver, should be enabled to obtain a compleat Victory and Conquest over him.

Berriman.
Sermon
IV.

IN this Oracle it is observable, that the Race of Mankind are distinguish'd into two Ranks; the one is of those who do continue and persist in their Apostasy, for that Reason term'd the *Seed of the Serpent*, as fighting his Battles, and engaging in his Interest; the other is of those who do resist and oppose his Authority, mentioned under the Character of the *Seed of the Woman*, and intimated to be gather'd under one Head or Captain, to whom that Character did more eminently belong. That our first Parents could not be intirely ignorant of this Interpretation, was argued from the Inconvenience of taking it meerly in the strict and literal Import of the Words. And that it might be farther clear'd up to them, by repeated Revelations, cannot but seem highly probable, if we consider the frequent Intercourse of God with Mankind in those early Ages, and the Instructions which may be presumed to have been given by the Prophets and Holy Men endued with Inspiration. So that altho' this could be deem'd no Matter of Revelation, any farther than it was intelligible, yet there is great Reason to believe it was then understood in a good measure, and was left upon Record to receive farther Light in After-ages. Which takes off the Objection some have made, That such a Revelation must be useless, since it could not be understood. It was not useless to those to whom it was deliver'd, who must suppose

Berriman.
Sermon
IV.

suppose (as we have seen) a farther Meaning than the naked Letter imports, and most probably the same in Substance which is taught in the Church. And much less was it useless to the Ages that came after, who had new Light thrown in upon this ancient Prophecy, and were let by Degrees into the full Compass and Design of it. Both these Particulars are to be farther clear'd in the Sequel of my Discourses.

AND, First, for the Sense in which our first Parents understood it, I make no doubt to shew, That the short Hints which are left us of the Religious Notions and Sentiments of their Times, do argue that this ancient Oracle was taken in that very Acceptation, and that the earliest Ages did look for a Deliverer, who should repair the Damage of the Fall.

THE Allusions that are made to it under the Character of that old Serpent, called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole World, that great Dragon in the Revelation, which so vehemently persecuted the Woman and her Child; in St. Paul's Expectation, that the Lord God shall bruise Satan under our Feet shortly; in his comparing the corrupting of our Minds from the Simplicity of Christ, to the Serpent's beguiling Eve through his Subtily, in the Prophet Isaiah's Remark, that Dust shall be the Serpent's Meat; whereas the Seed of the Blessed of the Lord are set in opposition, and promised very great Advantages; in the Royal Psalmist's Prediction, that the Enemies of Christ, who answer to that Seed of the Serpent in the original Tradition, shall be made to lick the Dust, which the Prophet Micah has more fully express'd by their licking the Dust like a Serpent: All these may serve for Intimations that the mystical Interpretation of that Passage, is no novel Invention of our own, but was anciently received among the Jews as a fix'd and settled Principle. And tho' it might seem of itself to be no unreasonable Presumption, that they derived it by Tradition from elder Times, yet the Method I proposed obliges me to look into the little Remains and Fragments of those Times, for what Hints we can pick up of the same Interpretation; concerning which I have one general *Postulatum* to premise, that in so short and concise a Narrative of Things, it is reasonable to suppose the Sayings, which are recorded of those most ancient Patriarchs, should be such as contain some Matter of real Weight and Consequence, and ought not to be restrain'd to the lowest and least important Sense which the Words may possibly admit.

UPON this Presumption, I proceed to consider the Speeches recorded of those first Ages, and see what Reference they bear to this Promise of Redemption.

IMMEDIATELY after God had denounced the Sentence of Mortality on Mankind, alleviated, however, with the foregoing Promise, that the Seed of the Woman, tho' slightly annoy'd by him, should finally destroy the Serpent; immediately it follows, *And Adam called his Wife's Name Eve, because she was the Mother of all Living.* This, I know, we are apt to understand to denote her the original female Parent of all Mankind that should succeed in future Ages. But how low a Remark was this, if nothing more were in it, to be inserted in so short and concise a Narrative of Things! how little answerable to the Dignity of the Occasion, and the Connection of this Passage with what went before? What then could be the Ground of so extraordinary an Appellation? The Copulative in the Beginning of the Verse does evidently connect this Fact with the preceding, which contains the divine Discourse to the Criminals, concluding with the Sentence of Death denounced on fallen Man, *for Dust thou art, and unto Dust shalt thou return:* And yet he takes this very Juncture to give the Woman a Name, which should import her the Mother of all Living. He had called her only Woman in the State of Innocence; but after this Sentence of Death denounc'd, he gave her the new Name of Eve, which carries such a Note of Honour and Elogium in it. Could he mean to deride the just Judgment of God, and profess his Disbelief of the divine Decree, that he should thus presume to attribute the Character of Life to his Posterity, who were henceforth to be dying or mortal Men? Far be it from us to imagine it. Besides, if we should understand it of this frail and mortal Life, she

Berriman.
Sermon
IV,

Gen. ii. 7.

As the Man then, by this first Sentence which he uttered afterwards, expressed his Faith in the preceding Promise, his Expectation of Life and Redemption by the *Seed of the Woman*; so likewise did the Woman herself in that first Speech which is recorded of her, when, upon the Birth of *Cain*, she expressed herself in this manner; *I have gotten a Man from the Lord*, or, as the *Hebrew* would be more grammatically rendered, *I have gotten a Man Jehovah*, or, *the Lord*! She had fresh in her Mind the Promise of a blessed and

^b *Vid.* Witsl. Oeconom. Fœd. L. IV. cap. 1. § 27, &c.

^a See Bishop *Bull's* Discourse of the State of Man before the Fall, in the last Volume of his posthumous Works.
^b *Vid.* Wits. Oeconom. Fœd. L. IV. cap. 1. § 27, &c.
^c *Vid.* Zech. Hensel Differ. de Gent. desid. cap. 2. in Thesaur. Theol. Philol. Vol. I. ad Gen. iv. 1. Pfeiffer. Opera Philolog. Vol. I. p. 19.

Berriman.
Sermon
IV.

and victorious Seed: And she seems by this Expression to have understood that Promise of a single Person who should descend from her, and therefore be truly Partaker of the human Nature; for which Reason she terms him *וְאִישׁ*, or a *Man*; but at the same Time should have the Fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him, from whence she ascribes to him the incommunicable Name of God. Though Victory had been promised to this blessed Seed, yet it had not been mentioned at what Distance of Time, or of what immediate Parent he should be born. So that it is not to be wondered, if the first Parents of Mankind, as well as other holy Persons afterwards, whose Hearts were filled with Hope of this promised Salvation, should expect to see it accomplished in their own Days; and in the Eagerness of such Expectation should flatter themselves, upon the Birth of a Son, that that was He. And though his being termed the *Seed of the Woman*, without Mention of the Man, might intimate his mysterious and immaculate Conception of a Virgin Mother, yet it is not to be imagined, that the whole Contents of this important Oracle should be understood at once, till the Predictions of later Times added new Light to it; and the Event, attested by unquestionable Evidence, placed it beyond all Exception. So that *Eve* might be excused, if, upon the first Instance of multiplying human Race, she should mistake *Cain* himself for that promised Seed, or at least the Son from whom that blessed Seed should come; or if (which some have thought to be more likely ^d) she only looked upon his Birth as a Pledge or Earnest of that future Multiplication of Mankind, which should in Time produce the promised Redeemer. But either Way it argues her Acceptation of that original Promise to be such as has been already represented, that one of her Posterity should repair the Damage of the Fall.

A little Time gave Proof that *Cain* was in a different Interest; and instead of being that *Seed of the Woman* which should subdue the *Serpent*, was really himself *of that Evil One*, and one of those whom the Creator termed the *Seed of the Serpent*, as being influenced by devilish Counsels and sensual Dispositions. The Murder of his younger Brother was a Sin that cried for Vengeance. But the Loss of pious *Abel* was afterwards repaired by the Birth of another Son, to whom the joyful Mother gave the Name of *Seth*; for God, saith she, *hath appointed me another Seed, instead of Abel, whom Cain slew*. Her Mind was still intent upon the promised Seed, and when *Cain* had manifestly fallen short of that Character, she seems to have conceived better Hopes of *Abel*. But when *Abel* himself was dead, and made the first Specimen of that Mortality, which is the certain Evidence of the *Serpent's* Sting, her Faith did not fail or waver for all this, but at the Birth of her next Son, she speaks of it then as the *Appointment* of God, which could not fail or be eluded, that this should be *another Seed* instead of *Abel*, therefore not to be slain childless as he had been, but to preserve a *Seed* in the Earth, and propagate a Succession of faithful Men, till He should come, who is, in a more eminent Sense, that *Seed of the Woman*, that should *bruise the Serpent's Head*, and put an End to his Oppression.

AND in his Time, indeed, the Distinction that was noted between the *Seed of the Woman*, as including the collective Body of faithful Men, and the *Seed of the Serpent*, as denoting the Wicked and Ungodly, came to be further cleared up by the Experience of their different Manners and Proceedings. The former were termed *the Sons*, or *Children of God*, as retaining a steadfast Faith in his Promise, and Obedience to his Laws, which must imply such Enmity against the *Serpent* and his *Seed*, as is foretold to be in the *Seed of the Woman*. The other were the *Sons and Daughters of Adam*, or *of Men*; who, having no Principle of spiritual Life, are denominated only from their fallen Ancestor, and shewed the Prevalence of the earthly or material Disposition, both in the Largeness of their Stature, and Predominancy of their Appetites. That this Distinction grew considerable so early as the Days of *Seth*, we learn from that Remark

^d *Wiss.* ut supra, § 35.

mark which is made upon the Birth of his Son *Enos*,* *then began Men to call upon the Name of the Lord* ^{Berriman. Sermon IV.}; (or, as the Margin renders it more significantly) *to call themselves by, or rather after the Name of the Lord* ^{Gen. iv. 26.}, i. e. to distinguish themselves as his Children or select Family, in Opposition to the impious and irreligious Part of Mankind, who being reckoned, in the original Prediction, for the *Seed of the Serpent* ^{Gen. v. 4.}, are therefore termed, under the softest Character, the *Children of Adam*, or of Man, considered in his fallen and degenerate Estate, as vanquished by the Serpent, and without the Benefit of the Covenant of Grace. The Mention of this Distinction at the Birth of *Enos*, hath inclined some to think, that the *Sons of God* were to be found only in the Family of *Seth*, whilst the Posterity of *Cain* were all reckoned for Children of *that Wicked One*, persisting in their Sin and Apostasy. But since we read that *Adam* had other Sons and Daughters after these, there can be no need of confining the Distinction strictly to those Families, although they might be considered as the principal.

HOWEVER it were, we find in process of Time, that the Sons of God did so far decline into the Manners of the opposite Faction, that *the Earth* is declared to be *corrupt before God, and filled with Violence*. This brought the Deluge on the World of the Ungodly, when only the Family of righteous *Noah* was preserved from perishing by Water. The Name of *Noah* had been given him by his Father *Lamech*, in token of that Consolation which was expected from him; *This same* (says he) *shall comfort us concerning our Work and Toil of our Hands, because of the Ground which the Lord hath cursed*. Here is a plain Reference to the divine Judgment denounced after the Fall; and therefore the Evils, of which he complains, and in which he hopes for Comfort, may well be understood to intend those Evils consequent upon the Fall; from which, even the pious Part of Mankind are not exempted. ^{Gen. vi. 11.}

THE *Curse* upon the *Ground*, that it should *bring forth Thorns and Thistles*, and yield no *Bread* to Man without his *Sweat* and Labour, was doubtless more considerable in the first Ages of the World, before Men had observed the Course and Influences of the Heavens, or found out the best Ways of cultivating and manuring the Earth. But by the gradual Improvements that were made in Husbandry and Tillage, and the Provision of proper Tools and Implements for that purpose, this Toil and Fatigue was greatly mitigated in a natural Way ^{Gen. v. 29.}; and it might be probably in View of this, that *Lamech* promised himself *Comfort* from his Son *Noah*, who is particularly described under the Character of an *Husbandman*, and said to have *planted a Vineyard*. ^{Gen. iii. 17, 18, 19.}

BUT since the Things of this Life are usually put, in the Books of *Moses*, to betoken or point out to another; since in this short Account of Men before the Flood, we cannot but imagine some particular Weight and Emphasis in the Speeches that are recorded of them; and since the Dispensation of *Noah* is otherwise set forth as a *Type* and *Figure* of the Gospel State: Upon all these Accounts I would suppose this Speech of *Lamech* to have a farther Reference to something of a Spiritual or religious Nature. And thus, in the first Place, what he terms our *Work*, or Actions, in respect of which he wanted *Comfort*, may well be paraphras'd the Evil of our own Doings, that Iniquity and Imperfection which accompany the best of our Performances. And then, in the next Place, *the* ^{Gen. ix. 20.}

VOL. III.

(7 T)

Toil

* On the Side of this Translation, as pointing out the Introduction of publick Worship. See *Pfeiffer. Opera Philolog.* Vol. I. p. 27. It is also translated by some *Jews* (but less grammatically) *Then began Men to profane, &c.* as importing the Beginning of Idolatry. *Vid. Calmet Dictionaire* in voce *Enos*.

† See *Shuckford's Connect. of Sacred and Profane History*, Vol. I. p. 42. In all Places but this *יהוה קרא בשם* is observed by Mr. *Shuckford*, (Vol. II. p. 148, 149.) to be a Phrase used of none but *Abraham* and his Descendants, after the divine Appearances and Promises made to him; and therefore he translates it not *Called on the Name*, but *In the Name of Jehovah*, viz. of the true Mediator, who had appeared to him, and was promised to come of his Seed. *Quere.* Withal he supposes, that *Baal's* Priests called in the Name of *Baal* as a Mediator. But they called, or addressed their Petitions to *Baal*, O *Baal*, hear us. 1 Kings xviii. 26.

‡ In this Sense *Cain* is said in the New Testament to be *ὁ ὁσιος*, of the wicked one, 1 John iii. 12.

§ The learned Bishop of *Bangor* carries this farther, and supposes the *Curse* upon the *Ground* to be entirely reversed after the Flood, and that by virtue of express Covenant with *Noah*, as that *Seed of the Woman*, who should put an end to this Inconvenience of the Fall. *Use and Intent of Prophecy*, Discourse IV.

Berriman.
Sermon
IV.

Toil of our Hand, may be well interpreted to mean the Labour and Fatigue, and Miseries of this mortal Life: Among which, that is not the least which he proceeds to mention, that the Earth is accursed for the sake of Man, not only to be unfruitful without Pains and Agriculture, but to be, as 'twere, a Place of Exile from the divine Presence, in which, *whilst we are at home in the Body, we are absent from the Lord*. The opposite Advantage which *Lamech* promised himself, was not an immediate Removal of these Evils, but Consolation under them; such Consolation as arose from the Prospect of Pardon and Atonement, and an Assurance of Translation to a better State, as the Consequence of that Victory at last to be obtained over the old Deceiver.

2 Cor. v.
6.

No doubt, these were the Blessings to be expected from the promised Seed. But in what Sense could *Lamech* ascribe them to his Son *Noah*; *This same shall comfort us*? Why, without supposing him to mistake his Son to be that singular and extraordinary Seed that was foretoldⁱ, he might mean to assign a farther Limitation of the Family of *Noah*, as the Line from whence that Seed should spring; and withal to point him out for an eminent Type or Figure of that blessed Seed, both as he was a *Preacher of Righteousness*, and Repentance to an untoward Generation; and likewise as he was the Means of preserving a Remnant in the Ark from the general Destruction, and doing many memorable Things, to figure out the spiritual Benefits which we receive by Christ.

2 Pet. ii.
5.

IN his Time the *Wickedness of Men* increased to that Degree, that God determined *his Spirit should not always strive with them*; but after a Warning of an hundred and twenty Years, he brought in the Flood upon the World of the Ungodly, but saved *Noah* and his Family, to be the Source of a new Race of Men, to overspread the Face of the Earth.

Gen. vi. 3.

2 Pet. ii.
5.

As the blessed Seed had before been limited to his Family, and the Event had made it necessary, since there was no other Family remaining; so now, against the Distribution to be made of the Earth, among his Sons, it seem'd proper to distinguish in which Line that Hope and Expectation should be kept up. This he has clearly determined to the Line of *Shem*^k. *Blessed* (says he) *be the Lord God of Shem*. Where, in declaring *Jehovah* to be the *God of Shem*, he at once assured him of the divine Favour, and put him in mind of the original Promise, as now continued and confirm'd to him. Not as if his Brethren were utterly excluded from the Benefits of that Promise! For whilst it was more eminently assured to him, of whose Line the *blessed Seed* was to descend, it might nevertheless extend the Blessing of Redemption to all, who should continue in a State of Warfare with the *Serpent* and *his Seed*. Thus to *Japheth* in particular it is engaged, not only that *God should enlarge Japheth*, (which was verified in that the greatest Part of the World appears to have been peopled by his Posterity) but likewise that he should *dwell in the Tents of Shem*^l, which implies his partaking of the Privilege assured to his Brother in having the *Lord* for *his God*, and so being entitled to the Favour and Blessing of the same Promise; which was remarkably fulfilled, when the Posterity of *Japheth* were receiv'd into the Church, and so grafted on the Stock of the *Jews*.

Gen. ix.
26.

Gen. ix.
27.

ⁱ Vid. Witf. Oeconom. Fœd. Lib. IV. c. 2. § 6.

^k The Word *Shem* signifies NAME, which Mr. Fuller (*Miscel. Sacr. Lib. II. c. iv.*) observes to be prophetically given to this Son of *Noah*, because *Jehovah*, who is eminently called *the Name*, and who is emphatically said to *cause his Name to dwell* (שכן Deut. xii. 11.) where he vouchsafes any sensible and permanent Tokens of his Presence, was peculiarly design'd to be the *God of Shem*, and did accordingly make *his Name to dwell* with his Posterity, not only by *Shechinah* in the Jewish Sanctuary, which is the Word used by the Targum in that Place of *Deuteronomy* (שכנתיה תמן לאשראח) but more eminently by that *Fulness of the Godhead that dwelt in Christ*, (κατοικει, Col. ii. 9.) and by that Means (ἐκάνωσεν, from the Hebrew שכן) made his Tabernacle with the *Jews*, John i. 14.

^l Mr. Fuller (*ubi supra*) would have the latter Part of this Benediction to belong not to *Japheth*, but to *Shem*: so that the Nominative to שכן should not be *Japheth*, but *God*, the whole running thus: *God shall enlarge Japheth* (or *to Japheth*, Hebr. and Sept.) *and (or but) he (viz. God) shall dwell* (שכן) *shall have his Shechinah in the Tents of Shem*. I acknowledge the Thought to be both pious and ingenious; but the repeated Prediction of *Canaan's* Servitude inclines me to think, that the whole Benediction of this Verse belongs to *Japheth*, as the former did to *Shem*. *Blessed be the God of Shem, and Canaan shall be his Servant. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the Tents of Shem, and Canaan shall be his Servant*. As they were both to be united, so *Canaan* should be *Servant* to both, according to Verse 25. *A Servant of Servants shall he be to his Brethren*.

Jews. We may observe a Pcedency is given to one; but yet the Privilege extends to both. Berriman.
Sermon
IV.

As for *Ham*, indeed, whose irreverend Behaviour has a Note of Infamy for Example to future Times, he is not expressly included in this new Promise. Yet neither is he expressly excluded from it; but when a Sentence of Malediction is denounced against his Son *Canaan*, it may be observed, that it reaches only Temporals, that he should be a *Servant to his Brethren*; whilst that *Servitude* itself might occasionally conduce to his spiritual Advantage, and give him an Opportunity to embrace the Privileges of the same Promise. Indeed, as his Crime may typify others of a grosser Kind, so might the *Servitude*, to which he was adjudged, figure out the abject and wretched State of wicked Men, from that Conquest and Superiority which the promised *Seed of the Woman* should obtain over the *Serpent* and his *Seed*. But in this View the Sentence is not personal, but belongs to those *Children of the Wicked One*, who were meant to be delineated and pointed out; whilst the Persons both of *Ham* and *Canaan*, with many of their Descendants, might be saved from that extreme Malediction. Gen. ix.
25.

THUS far I have considered the several Expressions which have been preserved to us of pious Men before the Time of *Abraham*. I have omitted only the Prophecy of *Enoch*; a Prophecy famous in its Kind, and which foretels a most remarkable *Advent* and Manifestation of the *Lord*, in great Pomp and Majesty, *coming with ten Thousands of his Saints* (or of his holy Angels) in order to sustain the Office of *universal Judge*, and execute final *Vengeance* upon those that are *ungodly*. This, though expressed in very general Terms, suitably to that early Age of the World in which it was delivered, is yet most reasonably understood to refer to that *Seed of the Woman*, that was to subdue the *Serpent* and his *Seed*, and whose Office is more fully described by the Prophecies of After-times, to take *Judgment* of his *Enemies*, and *break them in Pieces with a Rod of Iron*. But because this Prophecy of *Enoch* may be excepted against by Unbelievers, as being no where extant but in the Epistle of St. *Jude*, I am content to pass over it at present, as less proper for their Conviction, who demand a Proof of the Christian Religion from the Old Testament. Jude
14, 15.

THE religious Notions and Sentiments which we collect from those other Sentences, do argue the Sense which those Ancients had of the Damage and Inconvenience of the Fall, and their Expectation of Deliverance from it by means of him who was first promised as the *Seed of the Woman*; and in Process of Time, as the Families of Men increased, was limited to the Line of *Seth*, of *Noah*, and of *Shem*.

To these we might pertinently add the Sentiments of *Job* and his Friends, who, though they were later than the Time of *Abraham*, and so below the Period which I am now considering, may yet be properly added to confirm this Account, because they did not live under the Influences of the *Hebrew* Discipline, but were guided by those Maxims of Religion which had been handed down to them from remote Antiquity. In their Conferences we find such Convictions of the Corruption and Depravity of human Nature, and that not implanted by the Creator and Author of all Good, but superinduced by one original Deceiver, and him not considered as an independent Principle, but subject to the same common Creator and Governor of all: We find such Expectation of a *Redeemer to stand upon the Earth*, as the Restorer of *Life* and *Immortality*, as affords no slight Confirmation to that Account which has been given of the Fall and its Effects^m, and the Method which was from the first proposed for our Redemption and Recovery.

NOR

^m I have produced this Argument from the Book of *Job*, but in a summary Way: because it has been very fully and accurately stated by the learned Bishop of *Bangor*, in the second *Dissertation* subjoined to his Discourses of the *Use and Intent of Prophecy*.

Berriman.
Sermon
IV.

NOR is there any Thing from which this religious Hope and Expectation may be more fairly argued, than the universal Practice of *Sacrifice* as an Atonement for Sin. This was no Invention of the Law of *Moses*, but in use before it; and though it hath been greatly controverted among learned Men, whether it were originally owing to human or divine Appointment, yet, methinks, a little Reflection on the Nature of the Thing might easily decide the Controversy. Our natural Reason might convince us, that all Honour and Reverence is due to God; but in what Way we might obtain his Pardon after we had offended him, and effectually engage him to be reconciled, this no human Art or Industry could be able to discover, till God should be graciously pleased to reveal it himself. Besides, where is the Congruity in Nature or Reason, between slaying a Beast, and expiating the Sin of a Man? So disproportioned an Effect must be owing to the Intervention of some positive Law; and since we find that God was pleased with the Oblation of such Sacrifices, (as we read, that he *had Respect* unto the Offering of *Abel*, which the Author to the *Hebrews* imputes to the Vigour of his Faith, and *smelt a sweet Savour* from the Sacrifice of *Noah*) we have Reason to conclude, they were performed in Obedience to his own Appointment.

ACCORDINGLY the Practice was both ancient and universal. From the *Skins* which were used for the cloathing of our first Parents, it has been reasonably presumed, that the Promise or Covenant made upon the Fall, was ratified by Sacrifice; and that the Beasts which were slain on that Occasion supplied those *Skins*, before the driving of *Adam* out of *Paradise*. And this being ascribed to God as his Provision, are an Argument at least of his Approbation and Acceptance of those Sacrifices. After this we read of *Cain* and *Abel*, how they brought each his several Oblation, agreeably to that Occupation of Life in which they were employ'd. *Cain was a Tiller of the Ground*, and therefore brought of the Fruit of the Ground an Offering unto the Lord: But *Abel was a Keeper of Sheep*, and therefore brought of the Firstlings of his Flock, and of the Fat thereof. Here we have an early Instance of both these Kinds of Sacrifices, which obtain'd afterwards, the bloody and unbloodyⁿ: And as it is not likely they should have done this without some Precept or Example of their Father *Adam*, so it seems from the Description^o to have been a Thing of Course to bring their Offerings to him, as to the Priest, who should present them in their Name. But it is added, that *the Lord had Respect unto Abel, and to his Offering; but unto Cain, and to his Offering he had not Respect*. How this Difference was made, the Text is silent: But from some later Examples, as at *Aaron's* Inauguration, *Solomon's* Dedication, and *Elijah's* Contest with the Priests of *Baal*, as also from an ancient Version of this very Place^p, which is therefore approved of by St. *Jerom*^q, it is not improbably conjectured to have been by the Emission of Fire from Heaven to consume the acceptable Sacrifice. So again, what should be the Ground of this Preference, whether it lay in the Quantity or Quality, or Ceremonies of the Offering, or rather in the Faith and Disposition of the Offerer, the Text is not express; but the latter appears most reasonable in itself, as well as agreeable to the Mind of the Author to the *Hebrews*, who ascribes it to the Faith of *Abel*, that he offered unto God a more excellent Sacrifice than *Cain*. Nay, it seems to be not obscurely intimated by God himself, when, upon *Cain's* Discontent, express'd on this Occasion, he expostulated in this Manner; *If thou dost well, shalt thou not be accepted: And if thou dost not well, Sin lieth at the Door*. Where the Ground assign'd for the Rejection of his Sacrifice is his own Indisposition, or undue Performance of it; and withal it is the declared Consequence

ⁿ Some have denied the Use of unbloody Sacrifices before the Flood. But besides what is here offered, see *Shuckford's Connection of Sacred and Profane History*. Lib. 2.

^o מקץ ימים at the End of Days, i. e. at a stated Season, or after a certain Revolution of Time. See Dr. *Jenkin's Reasonableness of the Christian Religion*. Vol. II. c. 15. p. 287, 288.

^p Εὐσεβίου Theodotion. in Hexapl. Origen. ad Gen. iv. 4. 5.

^q D. Hieron. Quæst. Hebraic. in Gen.

sequence of such Rejection, that his Sin was not expiated, but still *lying at his Door*. Which implies, that Sacrifices duly performed, were understood to have an expiatory Virtue, and make Atonement for Sin ^r.

Berriman.
Sermon
IV.

As the Race of Men increased, we have Reason to believe that the Practice of sacrificing prevail'd among them, since by the Time of *Noah* there was a known Distinction of Animals into *clean and unclean*, which seems, to have Reference to their Fitness or Unfitness for Sacrifice; from whence, at his coming out of the Ark, *Noah readily built an Altar, and offer'd Burnt-Offerings* of those that were *clean*, without any new Precept that we read of, and most probably in Imitation of the ancient Practice. As the whole Earth was overspread of his Posterity, so was the traditional Use of Sacrifices universally preserv'd. We have in Scripture the Examples of *Abraham* and *Job* erecting their *Altars*, and offering *Burnt-Offerings*: And as far as we can judge, from the Intimations of profane History, there was no Nation that fail'd of retaining this among the Rites of their Religion.

Gen. vii.
2, 8.

Gen. viii.
20.

Now what Ground can we imagine for this so universal a Tradition, and so evidently deduced from the remotest Antiquity? Surely no less than the Divine Appointment; and that for a standing Memorial of the Covenant made upon the Fall, and a Type or Figure of the Benefit contained in it. As then the Slaughter of the Victim did aptly figure out that *bruising of the Heel*, or suffering of *Death*, which was the Damage that the *Woman's Seed* sustained from the *Serpent*; so did the Acceptance of the Sacrifice and the Atonement which it made for Sin, betoken that Victory and Triumph over the *Serpent*, which is express'd by the *bruising of his Head*. Or if we could suppose the Ceremony to be human Invention, yet still the Divine Approbation and Acceptance of it, would argue the same Reference to the Divine Promise, and consequently its being thus far explained and understood from the Beginning.

NOR need it give us any Difficulty to consider that this Practice of sacrificing was retained by many Nations, who knew nothing of the History of Man's Apostasy, nor of the typical Relation of such Sacrifice to the Redeemer; since it is easy to account (and may be shewn in many other Instances) how the ritual Part might be retained, when the Ground or Reason of it was entirely forgotten. The Practice of sacrificing, as an outward Rite, could not be easily overlook'd, but was a Matter subject to the Evidence of Sense, and transmitted from Age to Age by numberless Examples: But the mystical Design was deliver'd in obscurer Terms, and less suited to the Taste of sensual and worldly Men, who would scarce truly understand, and much less keep in view, the Purport of the Divine Promise; and then no wonder, if they transmitted not to their Posterity the Ground and Reason of the Rites which they retained. But from what has been discoursed we may collect, that there were always some Persons, in the earliest Times, whose Sacrifices were made upon the *Christian* Principle, and were for that Reason grateful, and accepted of God.

To whom be all Honour and Glory, through Christ Jesus, World without End. Amen.

* They who would see an Account of the different Expositions of this Passage, may consult, among others, Heidegger. *Hist. Sacr. Patriarchar.* Vol. I. exercit. 5. § 24,—28.

SERMON V.

The Difficulties in Christ's Pedigree from *David* consider'd.

Preached, *May* the 4th, 1730.

MAT. i. i.

The Book of the Generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham.

Berriman.
Sermon
V.

WE have already consider'd the Notices which appear of the *Messiah* in the first Period of the World, I mean, from the Fall of Man to the Vocation of *Abraham*; and have seen how the blessed Seed, originally promised to our first Parents, under the general Character of the *Seed of the Woman*, was gradually determin'd (as Mankind increased) to the Line of *Seth*, of *Noah*, and of *Shem*. In a direct Line from him we find the Patriarch *Abraham*, to whom again the Promise was signally renew'd, with a Limitation, however, to the Family of *Isaac*, as afterwards of *Jacob*. That Patriarch's Posterity continued one entire Nation; but being however distinguish'd into Tribes, according to the Number of his Sons, the Promise was limited to that of *Judah*, and so continued, without any other Note, as to the Matter of Extraction, till upon the Erection of the Monarchy, the Royal Family was pointed out for the Birth of the *Messiah*, and *David* for his great Progenitor.

THIS being the last clear Limitation that God thought fit to make in the Holy Line, and consequently the Title of the *Son of David* containing the nearest Description that could be certainly assign'd of the Family of the *Messiah*, we find it grew to be his most usual Character, and in which the *Jews* delighted most, as pointing him out for their King and Governor. So when our Saviour put that Question to the *Pharisees*, *What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is he?* they readily made answer, *the Son of David*. And not they only, but the common People were well instructed in the same Doctrine, insomuch, that when they were astonish'd at our Saviour's Miracles, they put this Question full of Admiration, *Is this the Son of David?* The Beggars by the Way-side, and the Heathen Woman of Canaan, sued to him for Mercy under this Character: Nay, and the very Children in the Temple, saying, *Hosannah to the Son of David*. From all which it is evident, that this is no Character invented by Christian Writers in favour of our *Jesus*, but that it was the common Opinion and Expectation of the *Jews*, that their *Messiah* was to spring of the Line and Family of *David*.

Mat. xxii.
42.
Mat. xii.
23.
Mat. xx.
30, 31.
Mar. x. 47.
48.
Luke xviii.
38, 39.
Mat. xv.
22.
Mat. xxi.
15.

vid. Accordingly the same Opinion continues fixed and immoveable among them, as a grand Point of their Religion unto this Day: And though some of them, from the two-fold Character which they find of Christ, as suffering, and as triumphant, have feign'd to themselves another *Messiah* descended of the Tribe of *Joseph*: yet this is for no other Reason, but because they thought such an afflicted State to be unworthy of that King *Messiah*, who was to spring from *David* as their Head and Governor. Nor has their Aversion to the Name of *Jesus* ever yet pushed them on to disclaim the House of *David*, as an improper Family for the Birth and Parentage of the *Messiah*.

Berriman.
Sermon
V.

I KNOW it is suggested, by a late Writer, that the Opinion of the modern *Jews*, in the Decline of their Commonwealth, is of small Account in this Matter, except it could be shewn to be traditionally handed down from earlier Ages, and founded originally in divine Prediction*. It is pretended that the Prophecies, which are usually alledged for the Support of that Opinion, had plainly no such View or Design at their first Delivery, and are not without Violence wrested and distorted to speak the Sense of modern Prejudice. Those Prophecies shall hereafter be consider'd: At present it is material to observe, that since such was the receiv'd Doctrine and Opinion of the *Jews*, and consequently no one's Claim to the Messiahship could be admitted, who was not descended of that royal House, it was highly expedient that some of the Evangelists should make out, that there was no such Bar against the Claim of *Jesus*, whose Pedigree was easily deduced from *David*, and so from all the rest who had been pointed out as the Progenitors of Christ. Which tho' it were no Proof, by itself, of his being the promised *Messiah*, (there being many other Persons besides him who could shew their Pedigree from *David*) would prove this, however, that he did not want that necessary Mark or Qualification for it.

WITH this View, St. *Matthew* and St. *Luke* has each of them inserted in his Gospel the Genealogy of *Christ*; the one going downwards, from *Abraham* to *Christ*; the other ascending upwards, from *Christ* to *Adam*. There are, indeed, some Difficulties in these Genealogies, which seem neither to agree with one another, nor with the History of the Old Testament. And because some of these do very plainly affect the Application of those Prophecies to our Saviour, which speak of the *Messiah*, as coming of the Seed of *Abraham*, with a special Limitation to the Family of *David*, I thought it would be proper to offer something for the clearing of this Matter, before I go on to the farther Consideration of the Prophecies themselves.

SINCE then the principal Promises of the *Messiah* were made to *Abraham* and *David*; the one consider'd as the great Patriarch and Founder of the *Jewish* Nation, to whom those Prophecies were originally given, which respect them as a Nation or Body Politick; the other, as Head and Fountain of the Royal Family, to whom, and under the Figure of whose Government, those Promises were made, which respect the *Messiah* in his regal Character; it is no wonder if St. *Matthew* chose to insert these two Names in the Title of his Genealogy, as the principal Persons from whom he meant to deduce our Lord's Pedigree; all other intermediate Names being only mention'd for the sake of deducing it from them: *The Book of the Generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham*. Withal, it may be noted, that the immediate Sons of these two great Progenitors, namely, *Isaac* and *Solomon*, were eminent Types and Pledges of the true *Messiah*; the one, in being born against the Rules of Nature, and then intentionally sacrificed; the other, in being exalted to a peaceable and ample Government, and magnificently building the material Temple, a Figure of the mystical. How significantly then is the *Messiah* reckon'd for the Son of *Abraham* and *David*, who, besides his mediate Extraction from them, was so remarkably prefigured by the immediate Sons of both? For the same Reason

* Scheme of Literal Prophecy consider'd, chap. iii, &c.

Berriman. son he is elsewhere described by the Name of *David*, and a *Rod* arising
Sermon from the *Root* of *Jesse*; because King *David* himself, the Son of *Jesse*,
V. was likewise an eminent Type or Figure of him.

It from the Title of the Genealogy, we descend to the Genealogy itself, it must be acknowledged there are two considerable Difficulties which affect the Question now before us: One is, concerning the Extraction of *Joseph*, the Husband of *Mary*, whom St. *Matthew* makes to be the Son of *Jacob*; and so deduces, by a lineal Succession from *Abiud*, the Son of *Zorobabel*, whilst St. *Luke* makes him to be the Son of *Heli*, and so deduces his Pedigree in a direct Line from *Rhesa*, another Son likewise of *Zorobabel*. The other is, concerning the Extraction of *Salathiel*, the Father of *Zorobabel*, whom St. *Matthew* makes to be the Son of King *Jeconias*, or *Jehoiachin*, and so deduces his Pedigree through a Line of Royal Ancestors from *Solomon* the Son of *David*; whereas, St. *Luke* represents *Salathiel* to be the Son of *Neri*, and so descended in a private Line from another Son of *David*, named *Nathan*.

THE Difficulty of both Questions I confess to be considerable, and to deserve a serious Disquisition. But if they could not be answer'd with all that clearness which might be wish'd, at this Distance of Time, when the *Jewish* Books of Genealogy are lost, and many Incidents of History forgotten, which might give Light in the Affair, this would not be sufficient to destroy the Credit of either Pedigree, except they contain'd some apparent Contradiction, which no possible Variety, in the Method of reckoning Descents, could compose or reconcile. For if it were possible to proceed with such Variety, then both Pedigrees might be true for ought we know, and consequently no Objection can be drawn from that Variety against the Truth of both or either of them. Now that the Difference between these two Pedigrees, is owing to the different Methods in which they were deduced, and not to any want of Truth in either, may be argued on the following Accounts, viz. 1. Because the main Point was known and allow'd among the *Jews*, viz. that *Jesus* was of the Family of *David*; so that the Evangelists had no need of Invention or Artifice to prove it. 2. Because, had they design'd to falsify, they would have avoided all Variation as much as possible, and deliver'd their Account with the greatest Appearance of Consistency. So that their very Variation is a Proof of their Simplicity and Freedom from any Design of Combination or Imposture. These Considerations are of greater Weight to defend the Integrity of the Evangelists, and our Lord's Pedigree from *David*, than the Difference that is observ'd between them can be to overthrow it, even tho' we were not able to conjecture the Reason of such Difference.

BUT to come nearer to the Point, we are not without all Conjecture what different Methods the Evangelists might use in their Deduction of the Pedigree, which might lead them into this Variety: So that tho' their Accounts of the Matter are not perfectly the same, yet both may be true, and both consistent. And tho' we cannot demonstrate, after all, that our Account is certainly right, yet it is enough for the Part of a Respondent, that it may be so, for ought we know to the contrary. This effectually takes off the Force of the Objection; so that nothing can be concluded against us, from the appearing Variety. There are then principally two Schemes which have been offer'd for the Reconciliation of this Difference.

THE first is that of *Julius Africanus*; a Writer that flourished in the Beginning of the third Century, and whose Notion of this matter is both stated and approv'd by *Eusebius* ^b, that the two Evangelists have drawn out the Pedigree of *Joseph* in two different Views, both in the *natural* and *legal* Method. It was the Provision of the Law of *Moses*, and founded in more ancient Practice, that where a Person died without Issue, the Brother of the Deceased should take his Widow to Wife, and the *First-born* upon

Deut. xxv
 5

^b Euseb. E. H. Lib. I. chap. 7.

upon such Marriage should succeed in the Name of the Deceased. It seems the Word *Brother* is there used in a larger Sense, which is not unusual in Scripture. For where there was no Brother, we may collect from the History of *Ruth*^c, this Right devolv'd upon the *nearest of Kin*, or if he should refuse Compliance, on the next after him. Accordingly the Children issuing from such Marriage, might justly be referred to two different Fathers. In the Course of Nature they were Children of the latter Husband, who was their genuine and real Father: But legally, or in the Construction of Law, they were the Children of the Deceased, whose Family was supported by this vicarious Generation, and Sons raised up to inherit in his Name. This is the Scheme of *Africanus*, who supposes St. *Matthew* to observe the natural Line, and St. *Luke* the Legal.

Berriman.
Sermon
V.

Ruth iii.
12, 13.

BUT if it be thought on the contrary, with some others^f, that St. *Matthew* observed the legal Line, and St. *Luke* the natural, still the same^g Scheme might be urged to account for the Differences between the two Evangelists; if we suppose only in two Instances, such substituted Marriages, whereby two different Persons might well be represented as Fathers of the same Son. Thus particularly King *Jeboiachin*, (whom the Prophet *Jeremy* pronounces *Childless*, is notwithstanding, by St. *Matthew*, said to have begotten *Salathiel*, who is, accordingly, reckon'd for his Son in the Book of *Chronicles*. Upon this Scheme then it is supposed that *Jeconiah*, or *Jeboiachin*, leaving no Child of his own, his Widow was married to a Kinsman of the House of *David*, who might be that same *Neri* that is mention'd by St. *Luke* as the Father of *Salathiel*. And so *Salathiel* might be reckon'd to have two Fathers: Naturally he might be the Son of *Neri*, but legally the Son of *Jeconiah*. This Solution, as it has great Patrons, and agrees well with the Method of *Jewish* Genealogy, so it seems liable to little Objection, except it should be thought harsh, that two Persons, so nearly related as to come within the Law of *Levirate*^h, should not meet in some common Ancestor, at a Degree less remote than *David*, but have their Pedigree drawn out in different Lines for fourteen Generations or more.

Jer. xxii.
30.
Chron. iii.
17.

SUPPOSE then (to avoid this Objection) that the Sentence pronounced against *Jeconiah* were not---write this Man childless, (as our Translation has it)

VOL. III.

(7 X)

^c It is generally denied by the *Jews*, that this Instance of *Ruth* belongs to the Law of *Levirate*; they refer it rather to the Law of the *Redemption* of Inheritance. Levit. xxv. 25. (*Vid. Selden de Success. in bona defunctor. cap. xv.*) But what if we understand it to have Reference to both, or that the Law of *Levirate* includes the other of *Redemption*? This seems to agree best with the Text, and with the Representation of *Josephus*, (*Antiq. Jud. Lib. V. chap. ix. alias xi.*) See *Turner's Boaz and Ruth. Page 48, &c.*

^d גִּיֵּל *Göel*, who was the same that had the Right of *avenging Blood*, and is called *Göel-baddam*; or of redeeming Inheritance, and is called *Göel hakkarob*. Levit. xxv. 26.

^e St. *Luke* using only the Phrase of τὸ γένος, &c. is thought, by *Africanus*, to admit a greater Latitude of Interpretation. But St. *Matthew* using the Word ἐγγίνομαι, is thought by him to confine us to the stricter Sense of Generation. But, perhaps, the same Construction of *Law* might justify both Phrases alike. Dr. *South* (in his *Serm. Vol. III. Page 333.*) understands this *Generation* in a political Sense; as *Salathiel* became the rightful Successor of *Jeconiah*. And so *Zedekiah*, tho' really Uncle to *Jeconiah*, is called his Son. 1 Chron. iii. 16. But *Africanus*, is certainly wrong, when he insists on the Words οὗ ἐνομιζέτο, which St. *Luke* applies to *Jesus* as the *reputed Son of Joseph*, and would extend them to *Joseph*, as being the Son of *Heli* in Construction of Law. For with the same Reason he might extend them to all his other Ancestors, throughout the whole Pedigree. And besides, it is such a Sense of the Word, as cannot belong to it in the first Instance, as applied to *Jesus*, and therefore ought not to be regarded. *Vid. Valesii Annot. ad loc.*

^f *Vid. Grot. Annotat. ad Luc. iii.*

^g *Vid. Spanhem. Dub. Evang. Par. I. page 100.*

^h Mr. *Bedford* (in his Notes on Bishop *Kidder's Demonstration of the Messiah. Fol. Edit. page 160, 161*) lays such Stress on this Objection, as to think it unanswerable, and expresses a Surprise, that so many learned Men should not be aware of it; since, however the Son, born upon such Marriage, might be referr'd to two different Fathers, yet he must still have the same Grandfather, and consequently this would make an Alteration but in one Name of the Genealogy. There would be Weight in this Remark, if the Law of *Levirate* reached only to Brothers; but since, as is observed above, when there was no Brother, the same Right devolved upon the *Göel*, or nearest of Kin, it might happen, upon the Extinction of any Line in a Family, that the Widow might be obliged to take some distant Relation. Thus, for Example, if the Line of *Solomon* was extinct in *Jeconiah*, his

Berriman.
Sermon
V.

it)---but write him *destitute*^h, or *stripp'd* and *spoiled*, (which Sense the *Hebrew* will well bear, and it suits much better with the Continuation of that Prophecy;) and then it will be lawful for us to take *Salathiel*, in St. *Matthew's* Account, and in the Book of *Chronicles*, to be the genuine Son of *Jeconiah*, which will agree with *Africanus's* strict Acceptation of the Word *ἐγὲννησεν*. Suppose, again, *Salathiel* and *Zorobabel*, in the Pedigree drawn by St. *Luke*, and mentioned in the Books of *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*ⁱ, to be different Persons from that *Salathiel* and *Zorobabel* mentioned in St. *Matthew*, and in the Book of *Chronicles*, it being no unusual Thing for the same Name to be given to Variety of Persons, especially in different Lines of the same Family or Kindred; and then the two Difficulties are reduced as it were to one, viz. How *Joseph* should be reckoned by one Evangelist the Son of *Jacob*, and so descended from *David* by the Line of *Solomon*; and yet by the other should be reckoned for the Son of *Heli*, and so descended from *David* by the Line of *Nathan*.

AND here it is that *Africanus* has applied his Distinction already mentioned, between *natural* and *legal* Parents, supposing *Heli* to have died without Issue, and then *Jacob* marrying his Widow, to have begotten *Joseph*, who was therefore in Course of Nature the Son of *Jacob*, but, in Construction of Law, the Son of *Heli*. And to avoid the Difficulty which was urged before, of Persons so nearly related being derived through so long a Line of different Ancestors, he supposes *Jacob* and *Heli* to have been Brethren only by the Mother's Side^k, but to have had different Fathers, the former in the Line of *Solomon*, the other in the Line of *Nathan*^l.

IF this Scheme be admitted, the Evangelists are easily reconciled, and all the Appearance of Contradiction is entirely removed. But then there is this Objection will lie against them both, that they give us only the Descent of *Joseph*, not of *Jesus*, and consequently do not make good the Title which St. *Matthew* has given to his Genealogy, *The Book of the Generation of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham*. For since both Evangelists

his Widow might be obliged to marry into the Line of *Nathan*, none being more nearly related to her deceased Husband than *Neri*, who might, after this Marriage be the Father of *Salathiel*. The same might be the Case afterwards between *Jacob* and *Heli*, who are both represented as the Fathers of *Joseph*. One of them dying without Issue, and without any Brother or male Relation of his own Line, the other, as the nearest Relation, might take the Widow; and *Joseph*, being born of that Marriage, the Lines of *Abiud* and *Rhesa* might unite in him, as the Lines of *Solomon* and *Nathan* had done in *Salathiel*. I mention this as a possible Solution: But there being another Method of removing the Difficulty, more agreeable to *Africanus*, (whose Opinion I am to propose) I have chose to let that stand in the Discourse.

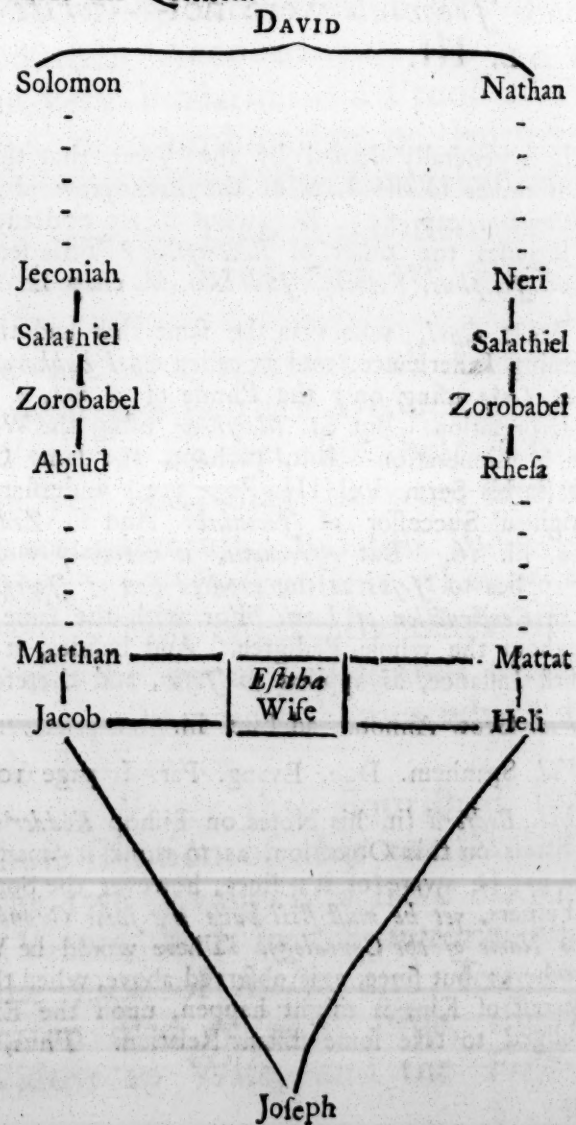
^h See Bishop *Kidder's*, Demonstr. of the Messiah. Part II. chap. 8.

ⁱ See Bishop *Kidder*, *ut supra*, cap. xi.

^k But this Solution itself is not without its Difficulty. *Valesius*, upon the Place, doubts whether these ἀδελφοὶ ὑπομήτριοι, or Brothers by the Mother's Side, fell within the Law of *Levirate*. And certainly they seem neither to answer the End of that Law, nor the Terms in which it is conceived; therefore the *Jews* in general are clear against it. Vide *Selden de success. in bona defuncti*. cap. 14. Grot. in *Luc.* iii. Turner's *Boaz and Ruth*, p. 152. Yet *Naomi's* Question to her Daughters in Law, *Ruth* i. 13. looks as if she thought the Law reached to such Brethren. But see what is answered by the Authors above.

^l Thus therefore the Pedigree will stand, accord-

ing to *Africanus* (omitting those Degrees which do not affect the Question.



I have

gelists agree, and it has always been the Faith of Christians, that *Joseph* was no more than his reputed Father, and the Flesh which he assumed was entirely taken of the Substance of his Virgin Mother, it may be thought to little Purpose, towards proving him of the Seed of *David*, and the Root of *Jesse*, to observe, that those Characters were fulfilled in *Joseph*, who contributed nothing to his Nativity, whilst his Mother, (as might be suspected from their Silence in the Matter) was of a different Extraction.

From hence the *Docetæ* and *Marcionites* of old, attempted to give some Colour to their Heresy, contending, that Christ did not assume real Flesh of the Substance of his Mother, but only a fantastick or imaginary Body; and that for this Reason the Evangelists concerned not themselves to derive his Pedigree by her, conceiving it might with equal Justice be derived by *Joseph*, who was confessedly his Father no otherwise than in Repute or common Estimation. And as the Matter was thus perversely urged in Favour of their Heresy, so, on the other hand, it was objected as a Difficulty in the Gospel Scheme, by *Celsus*¹ and *Julian*^m, professed Enemies of Christ, and by *Fauftus* the *Manichæan* Heretickⁿ, as well as lately by the Author of the *Scheme of Literal Prophecy confider'd*, the avow'd Champion for modern Infidelity^o. Nay, they go farther, and suggest it as most probable she should be of the Tribe of *Levi*, because she is mentioned as the Cousin of *Elizabeth*, who was confessedly of the Daughters of *Aaron*; and *Fauftus* the *Manichæan* is express, that her Father *Joachim* was of that Tribe^p.

THIS some, who had no heterodox View on Purpose, have thought to be a Point of little Moment, because it was the Manner of the *Jews* to denominate the Family from the Male Side only^q, so that the blessed Virgin, by being espoused to *Joseph*, passing (as it were) into the Family of *David*, from whence her Son's Pedigree was properly deduced in Right of the Husband to whom she was espoused. But though this might be sufficient to vindicate St. *Matthew* in deducing the Pedigree by *Joseph*, when he wrote for the Use of the *Jews*, and in Compliance with their Method; yet I think it cannot answer the ancient Prophecies concerning him, which are couched in the strongest and most emphatical Expressions, to say that his reputed Father was so descended, unless his Mother, from whom he really took the Substance of his Body, had been so too.

IT is therefore material to observe, that the *Jews* were usually careful (and much more we may suppose in the Royal Family of *David*) to marry in their own Kindred; and there was a special Law of *Moses* to oblige all such to it as were Heiresses, as the blessed Virgin is reported to have been^r; so that in describing the Pedigree of *Joseph*, the House or Family was shewn of which she really descended^s. Accordingly St. *Paul* speaks of it as a Matter out of Controversy: *It is evident (says he) that our Lord sprang out of Judah.* And again he observes, that *Jesus Christ was made of the Seed of David, according to the Flesh*; which could not mean that he was so meerly by Construction of Law, but by real Extraction of the Substance of his Flesh. The Angel *Gabriel* is said to have been sent to a Virgin espoused to a Man whose Name was *Joseph, of the House of David*; where the House of *David* is most reasonably understood to be mentioned as the Virgin's Family; since she is the Person principally meant to be described or characterized in that Passage^t. And at the Taxing of *Augustus*, when every one went to be taxed in his own City, the Virgin (we read) went to *Bethlehem* together with *Joseph*, in order to be taxed or registred, and therefore must

I have ventured here to correct a plain Mistake of *Africanus*, who has made the Father of *Heli*, the last in the Line of *Nathan*, to be *Melchizedek*; whereas that was the Name of another Ancestor, in the same Line, two Degrees higher, according to St. *Luke*: For I cannot agree with those who would strike two Degrees out of the Text of St. *Luke*, in order to reconcile it with *Africanus*, and such as follow him. *Vide Spanhem. Dub. Evang. par. 1. Dub. 24.*

¹ Cels. in Origen. page 80.

^m Julian apud Cyril. Alex. L. 8.

ⁿ Aug. contra Faustum, L. xxiii. chap. 8, 9.

^o Lit. Scheme, chap. 8.

^p Faustus apud Aug. ut supra. and Lit. Scheme, ut supra.

^q Ant de Dom. Spalatens. de Rep.

^r Eccl. L. vi. chap. 1. Paragr. 7, 8, 9.

^s Epiphanius says, the blessed Virgin was given to *Joseph*, καὶ ἔσθ' ἡ δαμάσκαρος αὐτοῦ ἡ κοίτη. Hær. 78. p. 1038.

^t Eusebius adds this Observation to *Africanus's*, in order to obviate the Objection above mentioned.

^u See Bishop Kidder's Demonstr. Par. ii. chap. 13.

Berriman.
Sermon
V.

must have been of the House and Lineage of David, as well as he. This the Christians affirmed from the Beginning; nor do we find it contradicted till the Time of Celsus^u, when the genealogical Tables were destroy'd, and the Memory of minuter Circumstances was worn out. Nor is there any Thing of Moment alledged to overthrow it. St. Augustine^w rejects Faustus's Pretence of her Father's being a Priest, as without any Authority: And as for the Relation which she bore to Elizabeth, (besides that the Word admits of a more general Sense) that is easily accounted for, in that the Tribe of Levi having no Inheritance, and therefore being not subject to the Law of Heiresses, did more frequently make Intermarriages with other Tribes, so that either by taking a Daughter of Judah unto them, or giving a Daughter of theirs into Judah, there might be easily contracted an intimate Relation between Mary and Elizabeth.

HAVING all this Reason to believe, that the blessed Virgin was of the House and Lineage of David, I see nothing to hinder us from offering a second Scheme of Reconciliation, and supposing that, as St. Matthew, who wrote his Gospel for the Use of the Jews, has given us the Pedigree of Joseph, into whose Family the blessed Virgin was received by Marriage, so that her Son, in Construction of Law, must be respected his; so St. Luke, who wrote to the Gentiles, and was one himself, might chuse to give us the real Genealogy of Jesus by his Mother's Ancestors, that so from both Evangelists together we might have a double Pedigree from David, the first by the Line of Solomon, the other by the Line of Nathan. In Confirmation of which, it may be observed, that Eli, or Heli, (which was the Name of Joseph's Father in St. Luke) might probably be the Contraction of Eliakim; which being of the same Import, is promiscuously us'd for Jehoiakim, or Joachim, which is by ancient Tradition reported to have been the Name of the Virgin's Father^x. And though I will not take upon me to affirm it, yet it may seem no improbable Conjecture, that the Family of Nathan had been referr'd to by the Prophet Zechary, as the Line of the Messiah, when he describes the Inhabitants of Jerusalem as looking on him whom they had pierced, and mourning for him, every Family apart; upon which Occasion a few are mentioned particularly; in the first place the Family of the House of David apart, and their Wives apart; and then follows immediately the Family of the House of Nathan apart, and their Wives apart; where the House of Nathan (which was otherwise included in the House of David) seems on purpose to be added for a nearer Restriction of the Line of Christ. Which, joined with the foregoing Considerations, makes it likely, that the Pedigree which is drawn through the Family of Nathan, is no other than the Family of the blessed Virgin.

Zech. xii.
10, 12.

IT is true, the Virgin Mary is not mentioned by Name in St. Luke, any more than in St. Matthew, because it was not usual to derive Pedigrees by Women; but Heli, if her Father by Nature, might well be deemed the Father of Joseph, who was really become his Son-in-Law by this Marriage. Thus there is no Difficulty in the Text, as it is read in our Translation, Jesus being (as was supposed) the Son of Joseph, which was the Son of Heli; namely, by this Marriage with his Daughter. It cannot be said, indeed, that the Phrase is so used in any other Article of this Pedigree; but then it is evident, that it is not used throughout in one and the same Acceptation; for when Adam, in the last Article, is termed the Son of God, it must then at least be used in a different Sense from all the other Degrees, of this Genealogy; and if we admit of this Variation in the last Article, I see not what can be objected to the Admission of another in the first^y. By this Scheme, indeed, it is allowed, that Christ's Descent by his Mother, was neither naturally nor legally derived from Solomon; nor was it needful that it should, what-

^u Apud Origen. L. 2. page 80.

^w Ut supra, cap. 9.

^x Vide Epiphan. Her. 78. § 17.

^y This I think sufficient; but there is another Solution (if any chuse to follow it) which supposes Jesus himself to be here represented as the Son (i. e. Grandson) of Heli, and so includes the Name of Joseph in the

whatever some great Men * have imagined to the contrary. He was promised to come from the *Loins of David*, and as the *Fruit of his Body*; so that it was necessary his fleshly Extraction should be deduced from him; but that might be fulfilled in the Line of *Nathan*, as well as *Solomon*. *Solomon*, as the immediate Son of *David*, and the Heir of his Throne, was an illustrious Type and Figure of the *Messiah*: But many were the Persons who figured out the several Parts of his Office and Character, and yet are not reckoned in the List of his Progenitors. The Right of Succession to his Throne will be equally secured, if *Joseph* be supposed only the last in the Line of *Solomon*, and the blessed Virgin to be the Heiress of the Line of *Nathan* *. Though, to speak the Truth, I cannot say it was necessary that Right should devolve on him from the eldest Line; for as *Solomon* was not himself the eldest Son of *David*, so I see nothing hinder, but the *Messiah* also might be descended of a younger Line, especially since the temporal Kingdom was abolished, and his Throne removed.

Berriman.
Sermon
V.

IN vain, then, will any modern *Jews*, or other Infidels, endeavour to shake the Belief of that which was allowed among the Ancients, that *Jesus* was the Son of *David*, as well as *Abraham*. And now having cleared this great Point from the Prejudices that might seem to lie against it, I may the better proceed to consider those Prophecies of the *Messiah*, which fall within the Compass of the second Period, namely, such as were subsequent to the Call of *Abraham*. And because this takes in a large Tract of Time, and great Variety of Prophecies, (the Notices of the *Messiah* being more clear and frequent, as the Time for his Appearance advanced nearer on) it will be proper again to distinguish this Period into shorter Intervals, that we may better observe the gradual Opening of this great Mystery, and see by what Steps the Knowledge of the Gospel was communicated and displayed. To this Purpose St. *Matthew* has furnished a Remark, at the Conclusion of his Genealogy, which divides the whole Period into three Intervals. So (says he) *all the Generations from Abraham to David, are fourteen Generations; and from David until the carrying*

VOL. III.

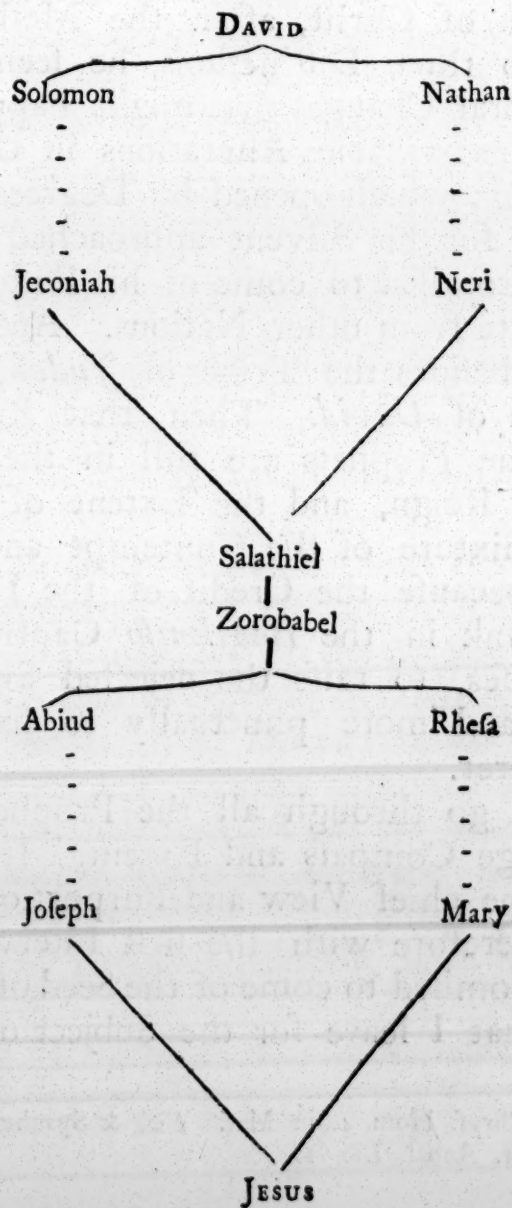
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the same Parenthesis with *ὡς ἐνομιζέτο*, in this manner; καὶ αὐτὸς ὃν ὁ ἰσχυρὸς ἀσπὶς ἐστὶν τοῦ ἀντικειμένου ἀρχομένου, ὡς (ὡς ἐνομιζέτο ὡς ἰσχυρὸς) τῷ Ἡλὶ, κ. τ. λ. Vid. Spanhem. Dub. Evang. Par. i. pag. 124. ad Dub. 22.

* Jam si a *Mariæ* genealogia excludetur *Solomo* Christus esse Christus desinet. Calvin. Comment. in Harm. Evang. ad Mat. i. ver. 3. Vide Spanhem. Dub. Evang. Par. i. Dub. 22.

* And yet, if any one shall chuse it, we may deduce the Virgin's Pedigree from *Solomon*, by supposing *Salathiel* and *Zorobabel* to be the same Persons in both Pedigrees; and then the former of them, by the Law of *Levirate*, might naturally be the Son of a Father in one Line, and legally the Son of a Father in the other, the Males of the first line being quite extinct. After this, *Zorobabel* having two Sons, viz *Abiud* and *Rhesa*, *Joseph* might descend from the elder of them, and the blessed Virgin from the younger, and so the Line of *Abiud* concluding with *Joseph*, his Right, in consequence of his Marriage with *Mary* the Daughter of *Heli*, would pass into the Line of *Rhesa*, and so the Son of *Mary*, in the Course of Law, would become the rightful Successor of *David*. See Dr. *South's* Sermon on Rev. xxii. 16. Vol. III. page 339, &c. Let this then be the Representation of the second Scheme.



DAVID

JESUS

Berriman. Sermon V. rying away into Babylon, are fourteen Generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ, are fourteen Generations.

Mat. i. 17. IT can hardly be supposed the Evangelist should have made this Distinction without some View or Design. In general it may be said, that it is helpful to Memory, and a Means of preserving the Text from Falsification or Corruption. But might not other Methods of Division have been as useful to those Purposes? What was the special Ground for giving the Preference to this tripartite Division, and dropping some Generations in the second Interval to make it equal to the rest? To omit the mystical Accounts which have been given of this Matter, that of St. *Chrysostom* is most generally followed*, That in regard there were three more remarkable Estates of the *Hebrew Commonwealth*, as it was first in a State of Growth or Increase, and governed by Patriarchs, Prophets, and Judges, till the Time of *David*, (no Account being taken of the Reign of *Saul*, which was tragical and unhappy, and hastened by the precipitate Desires of the People, before the Time which God had chosen for the Monarchy) next in its regal or monarchical Estate, as it was governed by a Race of Kings, from *David* to the Time of the *Babylonish* Captivity; and lastly, in its weaker State of Declension and Dependence, as this Abolition of the Regal Power was followed by a Succession of Ducal Governors and Chief Priests, who ruled with the Assistance of the *Sanhedrin* till *Herod's* Assumption of the Government, not long before the Birth of Jesus; it was St. *Matthew's* View to divide so long a Tract of Time, with an Eye to these remarkable Changes in the Government. And as this is agreeable to the Method of most Historians, when they would give a succinct View of any Nation, from first to last, (as of the *Romans*, for Example, who were governed first by *Kings*†, then by *Consuls*, *Dictators*, and *Decemviri*, and last of all by *Emperors*;) so withal it might give an Intimation, that upon the Birth of Christ, at a like Distance of Generations with the former, there was now another Change of Affairs to be expected, in the Erection of that Kingdom which should never be destroyed.

BUT to say the Truth, as St. *Matthew's* View was to clear up the Pedigree of Christ, after the Method of the *Jews*, so in his Distribution of it into three Distinctions, he seems to have had an Eye not meerly to the temporal Changes that might happen in the Government, but likewise to the most remarkable Alterations in the State of Prophecy with relation to the *Messiah*; which opened by Degrees, and grew more and more express, as the Time for his Advent approached nearer on. In the Time of *Abraham* he was promised to come of his Posterity, considered as a select Body of People, separate from other Nations. And so it continued with little other Restriction, besides the Tribe of *Judah*, till the Erection of the Kingdom in the House of *David*. Then that Royal Family was fixed for his Nativity; and the Prophets are full in their Descriptions of the Peace and Splendor of his Reign, and the Extent of his Authority, though not without some Intermixture of the Contempt and Sufferings which he should go through. And because the Credit of the House of *David* seemed (as it were) lost, and sunk in the *Babylonish* Captivity, it was needful, by new and express Promises, to raise the dejected Spirits of the *Jews* with Hopes of Restoration, and more punctually to fix the Time for the coming of this great Deliverer.

TO go through all the Prophecies of every Period, would be a Work of large Compass and Extent. It may suffice to my Design, to shew what was the chief View and Purport of them under every Division. I should begin therefore with the first Interval from *Abraham* to *David*, whilst Christ was promised to come of the Seed of the Patriarchs, and of the Tribe of *Judah*. But that I leave for the Subject of some following Discourses.

S E R M O N

* D. Chryf. Hom. 4. in Mat. Vide & Spanhem. Dub. Evang. Par. 1. Dub. 15.

† Tacit. Annal. Lib. 1.

SERMON VI.

The Promises made to *Abraham* and his Seed.

Preached, *September* the 7th, 1730.

The First SERMON on this TEXT.

GAL. iii. 16.

Now to Abraham and his Seed were the Promises made. He saith not, and to Seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy Seed, which is Christ.

I HAVE formerly consider'd those Prophecies of the *Messiah* which were previous to the Call of *Abraham*, and have so far prepared the Way to those which follow it, as to shew the Nation and Family of *Jesus*, and remove some considerable Difficulties, which have been thought to occur in those Genealogies or Pedigrees which are recorded in the Gospel. It may, therefore, now, be assumed as an undoubted Truth, That *Jesus* was, as the *Jews* expected their *Messiah* to be, of the Seed of *Abraham*, and of the Family of *David*. It remains still to be shewn, That this their Expectation was not grounded meerly in modern Prejudice, but had a real and rational Foundation in the ancient Predictions which were given to their Fathers. By those Predictions, it was observed, the Matter opened gradually; and as there were three more remarkable Estates or Conditions of the *Hebrew* Commonwealth, with respect to their Government or outward Polity; one from the Call of *Abraham*, to the Erection of the Monarchy in the House of *David*; the next, to the Destruction of it in the *Babylonish* Captivity; and the last from thence to that Age in which *Jesus* did appear; so the Prophecies of the *Messiah* were suitably diversified, either generally to denote him as coming of that Nation or People; or as inheriting the Throne and Monarchy of *David*: or as specially repairing, and at a set Time, the Breaches and Injuries sustained by it. With a view to this Variation, I took leave to conjecture, That *St. Matthew*, in his Deduction of the Pedigree of *Jesus* from the Time of *Abraham*, has distinguish'd it into three Periods or Intervals; and accordingly I purposed to consider the State of Prophecy under each of those Periods distinctly, with regard to this great Event, the Coming of the *Messiah*.

THE general Corruption and Degeneracy of Mankind was not cured by the Flood, but the Insolence of their Attempts appeared quickly in the Tower of *Babel*,

Berriman.
Sermon
VI.

Babel, and in the Growth of Idolatry. The *Chaldeans* were very early tinctured with Idolatrous Notions^a: And if the Inhabitants of *Egypt* and *Canaan* did not so soon lose the Knowledge and Worship of the true God, yet there were some among them charged with great Enormities in Practice; and God, who foresaw how this would shortly vitiate and corrupt their Principles, thought fit to select a single Family, for Preservation of the Worship of the one true God, and for a nearer Limitation of that Line in which the *blessed Seed* should be expected, affording new and clearer Revelations of that Matter.

Gen. xvii. 7. THAT *Seed* had been already determin'd to the Line of *Shem*; and among his Descendants we find *Abram* singled out, to receive a Confirmation of the ancient Promise, and ascertain the Completion of it in some of his Posterity. And from henceforth we perceive a mighty Alteration in the Divine Oeconomy: The Family of *Abram* was to be disciplined as a select People, and God, in a peculiar Sense, had engaged to be a *God unto him, and to his Seed after him*. Whilst other Nations seemed to be neglected, and left to follow their own Imaginations, he prescribed them a Body of Laws as their proper Head and Governor; and by a continued Series of typical Prefigurations, prepared them for the Acknowledgment and Reception of that great Deliverer who had been promised from the Beginning.

Gen. xii. 3. xviii. 18. xxii. 18. It cannot be supposed, that the original Covenant with Mankind was meant to be vacated or superseded by this special Engagement with the Family of *Abraham*. It is expressly mention'd more than once, that *all Nations* were to have an Interest in the Benediction that was bestowed on him; *In thee and in thy Seed shall all the Nations of the Earth be blessed*. From hence it is reasonable to collect, that People of *all Nations* were to be grafted into his Family, in order to receive the Blessing which was promised him as *Father* of them *all*; and that whatever was specially engaged to his natural Posterity, had a typical Relation to the Days of the *Messiah*, and the Privileges of the Church, to be gather'd by him out of *all Nations*. The principal Parts of that Relation are with great Clearness and Accuracy pointed out by our Apostle in this and the following Chapters. I know some great Men have thought fit to give up this Argument of the Apostle, as not conclusive in itself, as suited only to the *Jewish* Method of interpreting by *Allegory*, but not really founded in the Genius and Design of Scripture. But be their Names as great and as many as they will, I shall venture to state the History as given by *Moses*, together with the Apostle's Exposition of it; and see whether the Circumstances of the Case do not easily incline a considerate Reader to close in with him. *The Secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his Covenant*. If Men be religiously disposed, and attend in earnest to the Genius and Drift of Scripture, they will discover in many Places a sublimer Sense, than appears upon the first and superficial Observation. But if they be disposed only to scoff and cavil, these are not the Men, whom the Holy Ghost thinks fit to Honour with his gracious Influences, for they are *the Meek* whom he has promised to *guide in Judgment; and such as are gentle, them shall he learn his Way*.
Psal. xxv. 14.
Ver. 9.

Gen. xii. 3. And again in the third Person, Gen. xviii. 18. THE Promise to *Abraham* is, by a late Impugner of the Christian Revelation^b, termed *the Corner-Stone of the Literal Prophetick Scheme*, as being principally built upon by those who would produce express and Literal Predictions of Christ out of the Old Testament. And, indeed, when Christ is specially considered as promised to the *Jews*, there can be little wonder, if, passing by the preceding Predictions given to Mankind, they should fix their *Æra* in the Call of *Abraham*, to whom so illustrious a Promise was most expressly renew'd and confirm'd. It was first made to him in Person; *In thee shall all Families of the Earth be blessed*, because then the *Messiah* was supposed to be included in him, *when as yet he had no Child*. But after the Birth of *Isaac*, the *Messiah* was no longer included in *Abraham*, but in his *Seed*; and therefore the Terms of the Prophecy were alter'd: *In thy Seed shall all the Nations of the Earth be blessed*,
the Nations of the Earth shall be blessed in him.
Act. vii. 5.

^a See Mr. Shuckford's Connect. Vol. I. page 309, &c.

^b Scheme of Lit. Proph. chap. 5. § 3.

bleſſed, or (as the Word in the laſt Conjugation more emphatically ſignifies) ſhall *bleſs themſelves*, namely, by getting engrafted upon his Stock, and ſo entitled to the Bleſſing of his Seed.

IT has, indeed, been pretended, that this Promise undertakes for nothing more, than ſuch Increate and worldly Proſperity, as would ſtrike *all Nations* round with Admiration, and induce them to *bleſs themſelves*, (as we ſay) by wiſhing for like Proſperity with the Seed of *Abraham*; or elſe to uſe it for a Form of Benediction when they wiſh'd well to other People, that they might be *as the Seed of Abraham*. To confirm which Remark, this Caſe has been urged as parallel with the Bleſſing of the Sons of *Joſeph*^c, to whom the Patriarch *Jacob* bequeath'd his Benediction in theſe Terms, *In thee ſhall Iſrael bleſs, ſaying, God make thee as Ephraim and as Manaſſeh*. But beſides that here is a manifeſt Variation of the Phraſe in the Original, which quite deſtroys the Analogy of theſe Paſſages^d: If this had been all that was intended by ſo ſolemn a Promise, and ſo many Times repeated, and upon which ſuch mighty Streſs is laid, as the principal Part of the *Covenant eſtabliſhed with Iſaac*, it ſeems extraordinary that *Iſhmael* ſhould be judged to ſtand excluded, who in reſpect of Matters meerly temporal, ſeems to have received Promiſes but little inferior. Nay, if we conſider how much ſooner his Promise took effect, and how many Years his Sons enjoy'd a Settlement before the *Iſraelites*, whoſe promiſed Inheritance of *Canaan* was poſtponed for more than four hundred Years after the Call of *Abraham*; there can be little Ground to underſtand this Bleſſing of temporal Acquiſitions, there could be little Comfort from ſuch Interpretation to thoſe Perſons, who had no Hope to have their Lives extended to ſo long a Period. But if they ſaw Chriſt promiſed for the Deliverer of Mankind, this was Matter of great Joy and Transport in all Ages of the World; and upon this Foot it was, that *Abraham* himſelf rejoiced to ſee the Day of Chriſt, for *he ſaw it, and was glad*.

THIS then was the material Difference between the Bleſſing of *Iſaac* and that of *Iſhmael*. In reſpect of Matters temporal, there was no great Inequality between them, except that the very temporal Bleſſings conferr'd on *Iſaac*, were made the Seals or Types of ſpiritual Bleſſings; whiſt thoſe of *Iſhmael* had no ſuch Relation or Significancy, but were referr'd meerly to ſecular or worldly Views, from whence he came to represent thoſe Perſons in the Line of *Iſaac*, or of *Jacob*, who reſted in external Promiſes; and, without looking to the ſpiritual Meaning of ſuch outward Privilege, were content with the Poſſeſſion of an earthly *Canaan*, and the outward Pomp and Ceremony of legal Services. The Caſe was plainly this: There were two Covenants with *Abraham*, or (which is all one) two Parts of the ſame Covenant, the Temporal and Spiritual^e; or the outward, which related to Things earthly and viſible, and the inward, which differ'd nothing from the Goſpel itſelf. Both Parts were clearly convey'd to *Iſaac*; but *Iſhmael* receiv'd but one. And as there were many in the Line of *Iſaac*, who attended only to the temporal Part, or to the Law afterwards given, conſider'd in itſelf, and neglected what was ſpiritual; theſe were ſtill in the State of ſpiritual Bondage, and therefore fitly referr'd to the Treatment and Covenant of the Bond-Woman's Son, which reach'd only to temporal and outward Things. And ſo the Apoſtle has explain'd this Matter, that *Abraham had two Sons*, whoſe different Eſtate and Condition did fitly figure out the different Hopes and Diſpoſitions of Men, who looked to be ſaved either by Faith in the *Meſſiah*, or by ritual Services. Theſe *two Sons* were born, *one of a Bond-Maid, the other of a Free-Woman*; to denote, on one Hand, the Bondage and Servitude of thoſe who were guided only by temporal and external Motives, and look'd to be accepted for outward ritual Services: And, on the other Hand, the generous Freedom and Liberty of thoſe, whoſe Hearts were purified by Faith, and taught the Duties of an inward

VOL. III.

(7 Z)

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^c See Scheme of Lit. Proph. chap. 5. § 3. See alſo *Jurieu's Crit. Hiſt.* Vol. I. chap. 1.

^d See *Shuckford's Connection of Sacred and Profane Hiſtory.* Vol. I. pag. 288.

^e See Biſhop *Sherlock's Uſe and Intent of Prophecy.* Diſcourſe V.

Berriman.
Sermon
VI.התכרכו
Gen. xxii.
18.Gen. xlviii.
20.Gen. xv.
13.John viii.
56.Gal. iv.
22, 23.

Berriman.
Sermon
VI.

ward and spiritual Obedience. And to shew that the *Son of the Bond-Maid* did represent those who rested in the *Sinaitical* Covenant, when literally taken, and without a typical View to the *Messiah*, she had the Name of *Hagar*^f, a Word which (in the Language of *Arabia*) imports a *Rock*, and is from thence made the Name of a certain City built upon that rocky Mountain, which is otherwise called *Sinai*. From which Allusion of the Name it was easy to consider her as a Type of the Old Testament, or the literal and external Precepts delivered from Mount *Sinai*^g; whilst the Son of *Sarah* denotes those who walked by Faith, and could see the inward or spiritual Design and Meaning of the Law.

BUT what, it may be asked, was not the *Sinaitical* Covenant dispensed to the Descendents of the Line of *Isaac*? Were not the legal Precepts, and all the *Apparatus* of a ritual Worship, expressly deliver'd and prescrib'd to them? Had not they the temporal Promises of Plenty, and Prosperity, and long Life, and the Possession of an earthly *Canaan*? There is no Question but they had. But then, as there were two Parts to be considered in those Precepts and Promises, namely, the Letter, or external Matter contained in them; and the Spirit, or inward Design and Meaning of it; so there were two Sorts of People, whose Views and Purposes were different, in Proportion as they attended more to the one or to the other.

Heb. xi.
16.

THE Land of *Canaan* was figurative of a better Country, i. e. an heavenly; in Prospect of which the Patriarchs themselves were supported through a Life of Pilgrimage and Travel, though they knew the Letter of the Promise was not to be fulfilled till more than four hundred Years after its Delivery. The Promise had been made to *Abraham* in Person, as well as his Posterity; *To thee*

Gen. xiii.
15.

(says God) *will I give it, and to thy Seed for ever*. And yet he lived in that Country only as a Sojourner, and had no proper Inheritance or Dominion of his own. How then was this Promise or Engagement made good to him? Why, besides the literal Possession of that Tract of Ground, which was in due Time to be secured to his Family, it had moreover a latent or typical Respect to that *Recompence of Reward* which the Gospel proposes, as the Inheritance of those whose Faith is active and vigorous, and operates by Love? So again, *Long Life*, in that Land of Promise, was typical of that *Everlasting Life* which is proposed as the valuable Privilege of those who are justified by Faith, through the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ. Thus the City of *Jerusalem*, with its legal Privileges and its ritual Worship, did set forth, by external Symbols, the spiritual Privileges of the Christian Church, whether in its present State of Grace, or in its future State of Glory, that *new Jerusalem* which cometh down from God out of Heaven; that *Jerusalem* which is above, which is free, and is the Mother of us all.

Rev. xxi.

2.

Gal. iv.

26.

WHAT wonder, after this, if the whole Nation of the *Hebrews*, as a covenanted People, did figure out the collective Body of *Christians*, and those Nations that were at Variance or Enmity with them, should be put to denote the Enemies and Obstructors of the Christian Religion; whether those wicked Spirits and Powers of Darkness, who are by ancient Alliance confederated with the old Deceiver; or else, on the other hand, those persecuting Tyrants among Men, or those Corrupters of sound Doctrine, or Votaries to Sensuality, who are all engaged in the same Service with him, labouring in their respective Methods, to oppose the Faith, and to withdraw Men from the Obedience of Christ? From hence it often comes to pass, that those Prophecies which literally refer to the Nation of the *Hebrews*, have yet such Characters intermixed, as shew them to be consider'd as typical of the future State of the Church, and the Judgments denounced against their Enemies, to be but as the Preludes of that heavier Vengeance God will one Day take on all the Adversaries of his Truth.

THIS

^f Prideaux Connect. Vol. I. pag. 430. Folio. ^g Vid. Wicl. Miscel. Sacra. Vol. II. Exerc. 5. de monte Agar.

THIS will appear the more remarkable, when it is remembered, that the Church at first to be gather'd from among the *Gentiles*, was only to succeed (agreeably to *Moses's* Prediction, as explain'd by *St. Paul*) in the Room of obstinate and unbelieving *Jews*; that when they had fallen from and forfeited their Privilege, God might, however, still have a peculiar People, in order to provoke them to Jealousy, and induce them to return to him, from whom they had gone astray; that so when the Fulness of the *Gentiles* should come in, the *Jews* also might come in with them, and all be united in one common Faith and Hope of Salvation. In this State of the Case, the Church of the *Gentiles* being thus consider'd, as substituted in the Place of the *Jews*, and standing in their stead, it is very natural to conceive that the Predictions, which respect this State of Things, should often make mention of the *Gentiles* so called, and so incorporated under the Style and Title of the *Sons of Abraham*, and describe their Privileges by those of that peculiar People in whose Place they stand.

Berriman
Sermon
VI.

Deut.
xxxii. 21.
Rom. x.
19. --- xi.
11.
Rom. xi.
25, 26.

If I should pursue this Observation, so as to exemplify it in a Train of Instances, it would bring me below the Period I proposed to consider. My present Design by it, is only to illustrate the Purport of the Promise made to *Abraham*: And as the Blessing of the *Messiah* was plainly the principal Thing contained or stipulated for in it, so from hence it may appear, that even the temporal Privileges annex'd to it, had a typical View or Relation to this grand Blessing, and were meant to betoken something of a higher and more important Nature, to be conferr'd in Virtue of the everlasting Covenant. In Proportion to these Views or Respects, in which the Promises might be consider'd, there were two sorts of People (as was said before) observable in that Nation; the one carnal or literal, who look'd for the external Promises, and restrained their Views to worldly Satisfaction; the other faithful or spiritual, who had an Eye to the Spirit or mystical Design of such Engagements, and looked forward to the spiritual Blessing stipulated for in Christ. Of both Sorts we have a Type in the two Sons of *Abraham*; the one born of a *Bond-Maid*, in the usual Course of natural Conception, and entitled only to temporal and outward Privileges; the other born of a *Free-Woman*, and by Promise, beyond the Hopes and Expectations of the Course of Nature, and entitled to such high Privileges, as made him a lively Type both of Christ himself, the Author of Salvation, and likewise of all those, who, by virtue of their spiritual Union, are joint Heirs with him.

NOR is it therefore without Mystery, that the Scripture has recorded the Expulsion of *Ishmael*, as not admitted to partake of the same Privilege with *Isaac*. It might have seem'd, perhaps, a Piece of Female Frowardness in *Sarah*, to insist on such Expulsion^b. Cast out (says she) this *Bond-Woman* and her Son; for the Son of this *Bond-Woman* shall not be Heir with my Son, even with *Isaac*. Accordingly *Abraham* seems to have resented it; and the Thing (says the Text) was very grievous in *Abraham's* Sight, because of his Son. But when we consider that the Matter met with the divine Approbation, and God said unto *Abraham*, Let it not be grievous in thy Sight, because of the *Lad*, and because of thy *Bond-Woman*; and in all that *Sarah* hath said unto thee, hearken unto her Voice, for in *Isaac* shall thy Seed be called: There will be reason to ascribe this Dispensation to a higher Cause, as mystically denoting the Worthlessness of meerly ritual and external Services, and the Acceptance only of the faithful Seed, or those who are *Children of the Promise*.

Gen. xxi.
10.
Ver. 11.

Ver. 12.

FROM

^b The Author of *Christianity as old as the Creation*, (chap. xiii. page 329.) charges *Abraham*, on this Account, as guilty of a very barbarous Action; which is in effect to charge God with Barbarity, who approved of it. But if we observe what temporal Provision God's Providence made for *Ishmael*, and how this outward Procedure was figurative of other Matters, the whole is clear'd up (I think) beyond Exception; especially considering the Condition of the World in these early Times, when it was easy to find a Settlement in any Country, and therefore usual to send the younger Children abroad in this Manner. See Mr. Shuckford's *Connection of Sacred and Profane History*. Vol. II. page 17, &c.

Berriman.
Sermon
VI.

FROM all this we may perceive the Force of the Apostle's Reasoning, that they are not all *Isreal*, which are of *Israel*; that meer fleshly Extraction is not enough to entitle to the full Privilege of Sons of *Abraham*. For though there were external Privileges to follow the external Relation in the proper Line, yet those Privileges had a higher and spiritual Import; for which they were not qualified without a spiritual Alliance, by virtue of their Union with the promised Seed, and Imitation of that Faith of *Abraham*, which was imputed unto him for Righteousness.

AND as in this View it appears, that many who were sprung from *Abraham*, according to the Flesh, were yet Strangers to the spiritual Privileges of his Children; so, on the other hand, 'tis evident that such as were received into the Church, and imitated that Patriarch's Faith and Obedience, of what Race soever they descended, were mystically united in Christ, who sprang lineally from him; and so to all spiritual Intents and Purposes the Sons of *Abraham*, and grafted into his Stock. Of this the *Jews* themselves could not wholly be insensible, when they admitted the Faithful from among the *Gentiles* as Profelytes to their Religion, and received them into one Body with themselves, by their initiatory Rite of Circumcision. But forasmuch as *Abraham* was accepted before the Institution of that Rite, and received it only as Seal of his *Justification* through the Faith he had before, they ought to have collected farther, that that Ordinance had no natural Virtue nor Power in itself, but God might admit the Members of his Church without it; that therefore when the *Messiah* should appear, this Difference should be no longer made between the Jew and the Greek, but the Law of carnal Ordinances being then abolished, all Nations should be admitted upon easier Terms. It was thus (we contend) that the Blessing of *Abraham* was to come on the *Gentiles* through *Jesus Christ*. From hence therefore argues the Apostle to the *Galatians*, Know ye, therefore, that they which are of Faith, the same are the Children of *Abraham*; and the Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the Heathen through Faith, preached before the Gospel unto *Abraham*, saying, In thee shall all Nations be blessed. So then they which be of Faith, are blessed with faithful *Abraham*. And this likewise (as the same Apostle to the *Romans* teaches) was implied in that other Promise made the Patriarch, that he should be a Father of many Nations, viz. not only by Descent, but Principle. For if ye be Christ's (as he has it in this Chapter) then are ye *Abraham's Seed*, i. e. if ye be engrafted mystical Members of Christ's Body, and so made one with Christ, who was lineally descended of the Stock of *Abraham*, then are ye through him reputed also for the Seed of *Abraham*, that spiritual Seed to which the Blessing is ensured, and therefore Heirs according to the Promise.

THUS we see how the New Testament was involv'd under the Old; and the same Scheme of Salvation has been regularly pursued through all Ages of the World. The Letter of external Privileges might belong to the natural Posterity of *Abraham*. But the Spirit, or mystical Design and Meaning of them, was no other than the Gospel itself, which extends its Benefits to People of all Nations indifferently, and unites them into one Body as the spiritual Sons of *Abraham*. It is thus the Apostle declares him to be the Father of us all, i. e. of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised, that Righteousness might be imputed to them also, and the Father of Circumcision to them who are not of the Circumcision only, (who have not only the outward mark in their Flesh) but also walk in the Steps of that Faith of our Father *Abraham*, which he had, being yet uncircumcised. For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that Circumcision, which is outward in the Flesh: (Such outward Signs and Characters are by no means sufficient to distinguish the true genuine Sons of *Abraham* from Sons of *Belial*;) But he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and Circumcision is that of the Heart; in the Spirit, and not in the Letter; whose Praise is not of Men, but of God.

AND

AND this may explain to us the Drift and Purport of the Apostle's Remark in the Text, *To Abraham and his Seed were the Promises made: He saith not, and to Seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy Seed, which is Christ.* Though *Seed* may be a Name of Multitude, and contain many Individuals, yet they are such, as in some View or other are collected into Unity, and referred to one Head or Original. But *Abraham* having two different Kinds of *Seeds*, it imports us to consider to which of these the Promises were made. It could not be to both in the same Meaning or Latitude; because *Abraham* had two Sons, who stand distinguished in this very Respect, That in one of them his *Seed* was to be called, and not in the other; that other, therefore, could not be the *Seed* to which the Promises were made. His natural Posterity by *Isaac* was typified in *Ishmael*; and, as such, entitled only to the literal and external Matter of the Promises. But the spiritual Intent or Meaning of them belonged only to the mystical or spiritual *Seed*, of which *Isaac* was himself a Type. And that *Seed*, says the Apostle, *is Christ*, viz. Christ principally and more eminently, but considered withal as *Head* of that mystical Society in which the Faithful of all Nations were gathered into one, reputed as Members of his mystical Body, and reckoned for that *one Seed of Abraham*, to which the Promises were made. So were all Nations to be blessed in *Abraham*, and in his *Seed*; God's faithful People, of whatever Lineage or Extraction, were to be spiritually united with Christ, and so grafted on the Stock of *Abraham*, that Stock in which his *Seed* was to be called; that the Blessing of *Abraham* might come on the Gentiles through *Jesus Christ*, and they might be entitled, to claim under him as Father of the Faithful. So that the *Seed of Abraham*, is a Phrase of like Import with the *Seed of the Woman* formerly explained¹; and as *Adam* is set forth in Scripture for the Head and Representative of Mankind, considered in their fallen and degenerate Estate; so has *Abraham* the Honour, on the other hand, to be proposed as the common Father of all those that are restored; though not by natural Descent, yet by Virtue of their spiritual Union with Christ his Son, the Head of the Elect, and in Right of their Substitution in the Room of the *Jews*, who were naturally sprung from him. Being united with Christ, the promised Son of *Abraham*, and supplying the Defection of his natural Posterity, they are significantly reputed for his Children, and entitled to the Blessings of his Covenant.

How uniform, how admirable, how instructive, is this View or Representation of the ancient Covenant, which makes Christ to be the Sum and Center of spiritual Blessings; and the outward Letter of temporal Advantages, to contain an inward Meaning of much higher Concern! The *New Testament*, indeed, as distinguished from the *Old*, is said to be *better Covenant or Testament, and established upon better Promises*. But then the *Law*, or the *Old Testament*, is taken only for the external Letter, in which the *Jews* were too apt to acquiesce; otherwise, if we take in the Spirit or mystical Design of it, it differed nothing from the Gospel itself, but only in the Manner and Circumstance of its Delivery. *Christ has brought Life and Immortality to Light through the Gospel*, which before was taught only by darker Hints and typical Representations. But still the Truths taught and designed were the same, though the one does more explicitly unfold what the other had involved in greater Obscurity. His abolishing of *Death*, is mentioned as the Ground of such *Life, and Immortality*: And what is that but the same Conquest of the *Serpent*, which had been promised from the Beginning; the same Reparation of the Damage done by Man's Apostasy?

How much nobler and more worthy an Idea does this give us of divine Revelation, than to imagine (as some have done) that God gave his ancient People no higher Views, beyond the Possession of a Plot of Ground, with long Life and worldly Affluence? Such Promises were, in their literal Import, a fit Encouragement to Men of low Understandings, and narrow Dispositions. But the Men

Berriman.
Sermon
VI.

of more exalted Faculties and a sublimer Knowledge, who *saw*, tho' thro' a *Glass darkly*, the superior Privilege which we receive by Christ, and perceived the substance represented by those Shadows: they had the Comforts of the Gospel in such Measure and Proportion, as was necessary to support their Hopes, and preserve a Sense of Religion alive upon their Minds. Thus the Church of Christ is One throughout all Ages, tho' under different Oeonomies, the Company of faithful Men, looking for that Blessing of Redemption which was promised to Mankind immediately upon the Fall; but first, in darker and obscurer Terms; as a Thing future, and foreshewn by Types and figurative Shadows, that the acting of free Agents might not be too powerfully restrained by the Force and Evidence of the Prediction: since that, in the clearest and most resplendent Manner, in that *Fulness of Time*, when God was pleased to *speak unto us by his Son*.

SERMON

SERMON VII.

The Promises made to *Abraham* and his Seed.

Preached, *October* the 5th, 1730.

The Second SERMON on this TEXT.

GAL. iii. 16.

Now to Abraham and his Seed were the Promises made. He saith not, and to Seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy Seed, which is Christ.

WE have consider'd the original Promise made to *Abraham*, and seen Berriman.
Sermon
VII. how the whole Race of Mankind, upon certain Terms and Qualifications, have a real Interest and Claim to it; that it was not partially restrained to his natural Posterity, but whilst that was pointed out for the Line of which Christ should descend according to the Flesh, the Blessing of his Redemption was meant to extend much farther, so that the Faithful from among all Nations, by being united in his mystical Body, should be reputed for the spiritual *Seed of Abraham, and Children of the Promise*; that therefore those outward Privileges which were literally bestowed upon his natural Progeny, were designed to figure out those inward and spiritual Blessings, which the Gospel more openly proposes to the Faithful in Christ Jesus: That lastly, to this Purpose, he had *two Sons*, who served as Types or Emblems of those two different Kinds of *Seeds* ascribed to him; the one born of a *Bond-Woman* in the ordinary Course of Nature, and entitled only to temporal and outward Privileges, to betoken his meerly natural Posterity, resting in the Servitude of ritual Worship and external Promises; the other born of a *Free-Woman*, and by *Promise*, beyond the Hope and Expectations of the Course of Nature, and receiving the Assurance of that *blessed Seed* which should restore the Hopes of Immortality; to betoken, on the other hand, the Regeneration and new Birth of those (of whatever Nation or Country) who, being by Faith incorporated into *one Body in Christ*, are reputed for that *one Seed of Abraham*, to which alone the Promises were made in their sublime and spiritual Acceptation. By all which, we do not mean that *Ishmael* was absolutely reprobated, or excluded from the Covenant of Grace; for though his natural Estate did figure out the State of those who stand excluded for their own Demerit, yet if he imitated the Faith and Obedience of his Parent, he would then

Berriman. then be spiritually grafted on the Line of *Isaac*, and included in that mystical
Sermon Body which is reckoned for the *spiritual Seed*.
VII.

THE like is to be said of the next Limitation in this select Family. The
Gen. xxvi. *Blessing of Abraham*, which had already been assured to *Isaac*, was in the next
4. Generation bequeathed to his Son *Jacob*; and with him, again, in express Terms,
Gen. God renewed the same Covenant, that *in his Seed should all the Families of the*
xxviii. 4. *Earth be blessed*. By this means the Line of the *Messiah* was again pointed out;
xxviii. 14. and though *Esau*, the other Son of *Isaac*, had likewise the Promise of many
Gen. xxvii. temporal Advantages, yet it was not without a plain Reserve of Superiority to
39, 40. the Posterity of *Jacob*; agreeably to that Prediction, which had been uttered
Gen. xxv. before the Birth of them both, that *the Elder should serve the Younger*. That
23. outward Superiority, which took not place till many Ages afterwards, and was
 not designed to be perpetual, was aptly figurative of those spiritual Privileges,
 which are enjoyed within the *Peculium*, and conferred as the Blessing of the
Mal. i. *promised Seed*. This is what the Scripture terms the *loving of Jacob, and hating*
2, 3. *Esau*; because it figured out the Distinction God is pleased to make between
Rom. ix. those who continue in their fallen Estate, and those who, by virtue of their
13. Union with Christ, and mystical Incorporation into his Body, do become the
 spiritual Sons of *Abraham*, and are entitled to the Promise of Redemption.

NOT that either *Esau* himself, or any of his Sons, were personally repro-
 bated, or absolutely, excluded from the Benefit of that Promise! For whilst
 God's outward Dispensations towards them, in not receiving them for his own
 People, nor training them up by a peculiar Discipline, did aptly foreshew the
 lost Estate of those who are without the Covenant, they might themselves, ne-
 vertheless, by Faith in that divine Promise which extended to *all Nations*, be
 mystically incorporated in *Christ Jesus*, and reputed for the *spiritual Seed*.
 There are indeed some Flaws in the Character of *Esau*, which fix a Brand up-
 on his Memory in sacred History. But if the Matter were attentively consi-
Heb. xii. dered, I judge it would appear, that *that* on which the Scripture lays the great-
16, 17. est Stress, namely, the *Selling* of his *Birthright*, to gratify the present Cra-
 vings of his Appetite, how far soever it might be blameable in itself, as slight-
 ing the Honour and Privileges of the ancient Priesthood^a, or the *Blessing of Abra-*
ham, which might be deemed the *Birthright* in his Family^b, is yet chiefly cen-
 sured under a typical Respect^c, namely as it represents their Sin and Folly, who,
 for the sake of present and transitory Satisfaction, do forfeit and give up their
 Title to the Privileges of the heavenly Inheritance.

IN the next Descent after this, we find no such Exclusion, but all the
 twelve Sons of *Jacob*, were alike within the Covenant, and received for God's
 peculiar People. Here therefore the Psalmist stops in his Recital of the sever-
Psal. cv. al Limitations made in that select Family, when he recounts how at first God
9, 10. *made his Covenant with Abraham, and then his Oath unto Isaac; how, lastly,*
he confirmed the same unto Jacob for a Law, and to Israel for an everlasting
Covenant. Their Increase, after this, was such, that they soon grew considerable
 enough to be reputed a distinct Nation or Body of People; and then their ty-
 pical Relation to the Christian Church is the more obvious and natural, as they
 figured out that mystical Body, which is collected out of *all Nations*, and
 spiritually incorporated in *Christ Jesus*.

THEIR Division into *Tribes*, made them the fitter Emblem of that Variety
 of *Nations* and Kindreds of which the Church should consist. And to this it
 seems likely, that *Moses* might allude in that Passage of his Song: *When the*
most High divided to the Nations their Inheritance, when he separated the Sons
of Adam, he set the Bounds of the People according to the Number of the Children
of Israel^d. Or if it should be thought, from comparing the Number of the
 Sons of *Noah* in the tenth Chapter of *Genesis*, with the Number of *Jacob's*
 Sons

^a See *Shuckford's Connection*, Vol. II. p. 134, and 201.
Prophecy, Discourse 5. p. 133, &c.

^b See *Bishop Sherlock's Use and Intent of*

^c See *Jurieu's Crit. Hist.* Vol. I. chap. 12.

^d *Deut. xxxviii. 8.* There is another Interpretation of this Text, which supposes that *the Bounds of the Cana-*
anitish People were such, as might afterwards afford a convenient Settlement for *Israel*.

Sons at their Descent into *Egypt*, that the Lawgiver pointed rather to the Number of *Souls* in Being at that Time, than to the Number of *Tribes* into which they were divided afterwards: Yet still the Main of the Observation will stand, that the Nation of the *Israelites* bore a certain Proportion to the other Nations of the Earth, so that in certain Respects they might be set to denote or betoken one another. But in St. *John's Apocalypse* there is yet a more direct Reference to this Division into *Tribes*; where, as the Church of Christ, though gathered from among the Gentiles, is represented under the Name of *Israel*, and described by a Variety of Characters proper to the *Jewish Church*; so its faithful Members, who kept clear of the general Apostasy, are said more particularly to have been sealed out of all the Tribes of the Children of *Israel*. A pretty clear Indication, that the Tribes of *Israel* were understood to figure out the several Divisions of the other Nations, when incorporated in one mystical Body. Accordingly, I make no doubt, they are included in that innumerable Multitude which is mentioned soon after, of all Nations, and Kindreds, and People, and Tongues. So that the Gentiles here are considered as surrogated in the Place of *Israel*, and therefore entitled to their Name and Character; which is what *Moses* meant by moving them to Jealousy with those which are not a People; namely by receiving in their Stead, to be the People of God, those Nations which anciently had not been his People. And it was, no doubt, in View of this typical Relation of the Tribes of *Israel*, that our blessed Saviour promised his Apostles, they should sit upon twelve Thrones, judging the twelve Tribes of *Israel*, i. e. the faithful Members of his Church prefigured by them.

IN this collective View, and typical Relation, did God declare *Israel* to be his Son, even his First-born. And though they went at first into *Egypt*, as a Place of Refuge, to provide against that grievous Famine which distressed the Nations round them, yet there they were considered as in a State of Exile from their promised Inheritance; the Hardship of which was afterwards exceedingly increased by bitter Oppression, and heavy Servitude. From hence they were wonderfully rescued by the remarkable Interposition of divine Providence, taking Vengeance on their Enemies, and conducting them with Safety to the Land of *Canaan*, to which the Prophet *Hosea* very plainly refers in these Words, *When Israel was a Child, then I loved him, and called my Son out of Egypt*. In both Respects they figured out that mystical Society of which Christ is the Head, considered either as struggling under Hardships, or triumphing over them. And as this may be applicable, under several Views, either to Christ who is the Head, or to the Church, which is his Body, it can be no Wonder if the Evangelist reckons it to be fulfilled in the Infancy of Christ, when, after having fled into *Egypt* from the Rage of *Herod*, he was restored to *Canaan* upon the Removal of so great a Danger.

THE twelve Sons of *Jacob* being alike (as was said) within the Covenant, they were all entitled to the Blessing which had been assured singly to their great Progenitors. But because that included many Particulars, which could not be all engrossed by every one, it remained that a proper Partition should be made among them, and each receive such Share as was expedient. Thus, for Example, If the Land of *Canaan* was given in the gross to *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob*, whilst there was but one single Person to receive the Promise; yet when their Seed was multiplied into twelve Tribes, who were all within the Promise, the whole Land could not be given to any one, without Prejudice to the rest. It was therefore necessary that a Distribution should be made among them; and with this View, *Jacob* undertakes to impart his Benediction to his Sons, and foretel what should befall them in the last Days. It is thus the Son of *Sirach* observes, that God assured *Abraham*, by an Oath, that he would bless the Nations in his Seed; and that he would multiply him as the Dust of the Earth, and exalt his Seed as the Stars, and cause them to inherit from Sea to Sea, and from the River unto the utmost Part of the Land. The whole Blessing or Covenant, you see, was ensured to his Posterity. And so it was also in the next Descent: *With Isaac did he establish likewise* (for *Abraham*, his Fathers

Berriman.
Sermon
VII.Rev. vii.
4, &c.Rev. vii.
verse 9.Deut.
xxxii. 21.Mat. xix.
28.Luke xxii.
30.Exod. iv.
22.

Hof. xi. 1.

Ecclesi.
xlv. 21,
22, 23.

Berriman. Sermon VII. *fake*) THE BLESSING OF ALL MEN, AND THE COVENANT. Again, he *made it* (the same Blessing and Covenant) to *rest upon the Head of Jacob*. But after all this, when there were Twelve in Covenant, the whole Blessing could no longer be convey'd to any one; and therefore now he *divided his Portions, among the Twelve Tribes did he part them*.

IN this Partition it was necessary that the actual Descent of the *Messiah*, which the Son of *Sirach* significantly calls *the Blessing of all Men*, should be limited to one. For though all the Tribes were to be trained and disciplined in the Hope and Expectation of him; yet it was not in the Nature of Things possible, that he should descend from all of them; and therefore, if *Jacob* designed to make a real Distribution of the *Blessing* transmitted from his Fathers, he could not pass over this signal Part of it in Silence, but must in all Reason assure it to one or other of his twelve Sons. We cannot be long in our Enquiry, which of these it should be. For among all the Benedictions in the 48th and 49th of *Genesis*, I conceive there is none can be pretended to have convey'd this particular, besides the Benediction of the Tribe of *Judah* *. That begins with a plain Mention of some kind of Superiority above his Brethren; and such as should engage their Respect and Admiration, as well as assure him of Victory over his Opposers. *Judah, thou art he whom thy Brethren shall praise; or rather, Thou art Judah, thy Brethren shall praise thee*, (alluding to the Etymology and Import of the Word) *thy Hand shall be in the Neck of thine Enemies; thy Fathers Children shall bow down before thee*. Then follow some Particulars which do literally relate to the future external Condition of this Tribe, and among the rest, a special Engagement for the Continuance of its State and Polity, till the coming of that *promised Seed*, in whom *all Nations* should receive a Benediction. *The Scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor a Lawgiver from between his Feet, until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the Gathering of the People be*.

BY *Shiloh*, in this Prophecy, the *Messiah* has usually been understood, both among *Jews* and *Christians*; and though different Accounts have been given of the Import of the Word †, according to the different Derivations that have been assigned it, yet all of them do very well agree to point out the Offices and Character of the *Messiah* *. The Testimony of the *modern Jews*, which a late Writer rejects in other Cases, as of Persons heated with Prejudice, and big with Expectations of the great Feats to be done by their *Messiah*, ought, however, in this Case to be considerable, because this Text undertakes for such Continuance of their State and Polity as is wholly inconsistent with their present Dispersion, and therefore proves that *Shiloh* is already come; so that if the Force of Tradition were not too strong against them, to admit the Application of that Character to any other than the *Messiah*, they would be bound in Interest and Policy to do it.

BUT we need not rest the Matter merely on the general Opinion of the *modern Jews*, from the *Chaldee Paraphrasts* downwards to these Days. We have a Testimony (I think) as high as *Ezra*, and the Return of that People from Captivity at *Babylon*. For in the Book of *Chronicles*, upon mentioning the *Sons of Reuben the first born of Israel*, it is remarked that the *Birth-right* was given away for his Offence; so that *the Genealogy is not to be reckoned after the Birth-right: For Judah (it is added) prevailed above his Brethren, and of him is the נגיד Nagid, the Prince or chief Ruler, but the Birth-right was Joseph's*. The *Nagid* is a Term which the Prophets *Isaiah* and *Daniel* applied to the *Messiah*; and as the Author of the Book of *Chronicles* wrote after them both, there is little Doubt but he had an Eye to the same Person, whom he here mentions under the Title of *Nagid*, as coming of the Tribe of *Judah*. But whence had he this Knowledge of his being to descend particularly of that Tribe? You'll say, perhaps, because he was to be of the Family of

* See Bishop *Sherlock's* third Dissertation annexed to the Use and Intent of Prophecy.

† Vid. Gothof. Valand. Dissert. in Loc. in Thesaur. Theol. Philol. Vol. I.

* See Bishop *Sherlock's* third Dissertation, p. 317, 318.

of *David*, who was himself of that Tribe, and a *Chief Ruler* likewise. But then I demand farther, why this should be mention'd as an immediate Consequence of the disinheriting of *Reuben*? The Purport of that Remark naturally leads back to *Jacob's* last Will and Testament, whereby we find *Reuben* was actually disinherited, or doomed *not to excel*, and that for the very Reason here assigned, because he *defiled his Father's Bed*. And in Proportion to the two great civil Privileges of the First-born, we find that the double Share of Possession^h was given to the Sons of *Joseph*, who were divided for that Purpose into the two Tribes of *Ephraim* and *Manasseh*, but the Superiority of Government was reserved to the Tribe of *Judah*, before whom, the Patriarch declares, his *Father's Children should bow down*, (which the Author of the Book of *Chronicles* explains by his *prevailing above his Brethren*) and of whom *Shiloh* (whom the same Author calls the *Nagid*) was to come. From hence it is sufficiently evident how this Prophecy was understood from the Time of the *Babylonish* Captivity. And, I think, there are some strong Presumptions to be assigned for its being taken in the same Acceptation before.

Berriman.
Sermon
VII.

Gen. xlix.

4.
Gen.
xlviii. 5.

Gen. xlix.
8.

DURING the Stay of the *Israelites* in *Egypt*, we have but a very short and imperfect Account of their Affairs: But from the Time of their Departure thence, we find a constant Preference given to the Tribe of *Judah*; which should seem to be owing to this Expectation of the promised Deliverer. In their Journeyings in the Wilderness, *the Standard of the Camp of the Children of Judah went first*; and in their Dedication of the Altar, *Nahshon*, who was Prince of this Tribe, was the first to make his Offering. When the Land of *Canaan* was divided by Lot, the first Lot came up for the Tribe of the Children of *Judah*, by their Families; and in their Wars with the *Canaanites*, after the Death of *Joshua*, this Tribe was appointed, by Divine Designation, to go first against them. The Numbers of the Men of *Judah* were taken separately from those of the Body of the People; and that even when *Saul* was King, who was himself descended of the Tribe of *Benjamin*, that we may the less wonder in the Reign of *David*, to find the Men of *Judah* distinguish'd from the Men of *Israel*. *David* was a King of God's own Choosing and Appointment, descended of the Tribe of *Judah*; in whom, and the Continuation of the Kingdom in his Family, he meant to figure out the everlasting Reign and Kingdom of *Messiah*. And when the Kingdom was divided, upon the Death of *Solomon*, the Tribe of *Judah* only is mentioned as adhering to the House of *David*, from whence this *Shiloh* was expected; whereas the rest, who were mix'd with them, (except perhaps *Benjamin*, till the Time of the Captivity) had lost all the Privilege of their Distinction, and were included in the Name of *Jews*.

Num. x.

14.
Num. vii.
12.

Jos. xv. 1.
Judg. i. 2.

1 Sam. xv.

4.

2 Sam.
xix. 40.
Ec.

WHAT was the particular Privilege here assured to *Judah*, from what Point of Time it was intended to commence, and so to continue till the coming of Christ, is a Question which has exercised the Search of many learned Men, and been resolved with great Variety of Opinion. But without entering into all the Intricacies of their several Disputes, thus much I think is evident to all, who would not study to elude the Force of the Prediction, that here is promised a Continuation of the Tribe of *Judah* as a Body politick, with some Exercise of Authority and Jurisdiction; such Continuation as is not promised to the other Tribes; so that though they might sink and be lost before the coming of *Shiloh*, yet *Judah* could not, consistently with the Divine Engagementⁱ!

To see how they took this Prophecy themselves, let us look into those Times when they were threatned with a Dissolution of their Government. The Grandeur of this Tribe had been exceedingly increased in the Reigns of *David* and *Solomon*. And when the Kingdom seemed to suffer Dimi-

nution

^h This may be looked upon as a kind of Anticipation of the Law of *Moses*: For anciently the First-born had more than a double Share, and succeeded to the Bulk of his Father's Substance, whilst the younger Children were sent off with small Gifts or Portions. See *Shuckford's Connection*, Vol. II. page 139.

ⁱ See Bishop *Sherlock's* third Dissertation subjoined to his *Use and Intent of Prophecy*.

Berriman.
Sermon
VII.

nution by the Loss of the ten Tribes, yet that of *Judah* had the Privilege to give its Name to all those that resorted to it, and incorporate them into one Body with itself.

Ifai. vii.
8.
Ifai. vii.
14.

AGAIN, when *Abaz* was put in a dreadful Consternation by the Kings of *Syria* and *Israel*, and apprehended an utter Dissolution of his Government, the Prophet *Isaiab* was sent to foretel, that they should be so far from compassing their Designs, that they should both be humbled and subdued by the King of *Assyria**; that those two Persons, in particular, should quickly be remov'd from their Government: which was fulfill'd, in that the Kingdom of *Syria* was soon after overthrown by *Tiglathpileser*, and *Pekah* was slain by *Hoshea*; and finally, that *Ephraim*, or *Israel*, should *within fifty six Years* be so entirely broken, as to be no more a People. And as a Sign of all this, he proposes the *Messiah's Birth of a Virgin*, which was not accomplished till more than seven hundred Years after the Prediction. But how could that be the Sign of a Deliverance to be wrought immediately? or a Confirmation of the Prophet's Mission in the present Exigence? This is an Objection often made by Scoffers and Infidels, and sometimes allowed to have Weight by others, that have not thoroughly consider'd it. His Birth was necessary before the Dissolution of all Government in *Judea*; and therefore the present Designs of their Enemies must fail, at what Distance soever his Birth might be future at that Time. The Tribe of *Judah* must be preserved till *Shiloh* came, whatever became of the other Tribes, who had no Promise of such Continuation. And how then should the King of the *ten Tribes* pretend to enlarge his own Dominion, by extinguishing and dissolving that of *Judah*, and setting up a Vice-roy of his own over them? For this Reason the Prophet requires Faith in those who should see the Proof of his Prediction. *If ye will not BELIEVE, surely ye shall not be established.* Had the Sign he gave been any present Miracles, no great Degree of Faith could have been requisite to yield to the Evidence of Sense. But because it was then future, and received upon the Credit only of a prime Article of their Religion, therefore their *believing* was indispensibly required, to give them Confirmation and Assurance. And though in Punishment of the present Despondency, he threatens that the King of *Assyria* should afterwards prevail against them, yet at the same Time he calls their Land the *Land of Immanuel*¹, and thereby teaches, that it should not be finally destroy'd before his Nativity.

Ifai. vii.
9.

Ifai. vii.
17,---20.

Jer.
xxxviii. 4.
Jer.
xxxvii. 19.
Jer. vii. 4.

THE ten Tribes after this were carried into Captivity^m, without any Promise of returning as a distinct People; and those of them that did return, were mixed with the *Jews*, and reckoned to be one with them. The Kingdom of *Judah* itself is threatened likewise with Captivity, at some Distance by *Isaiab* and other Prophets, but more nearly by *Jeremiah*, who lived to see the Accomplishment. And how was his Message received among the People? We find they treated him as an Enemy to the Government, and falling away to the *Chaldeans*: They were more inclined to give Credit to their false Prophets, that spake contrary to *Jeremiah*: And the chief Ground of their Confidence lay in this, that they were the *Temple of the Lord*, a People sacred and peculiar to him, and had his instituted Worship established among them. But what, were not the whole People of *Israel* the peculiar People of God? Had not the Tabernacle rested antiently in *Shiloh*, which was situated in the Tribe of *Ephraim*? And yet was not that and the whole Kingdom of the ten Tribes laid waste, and the People carried Captive to *Assyria*?

* Ifai. viii. 4. See *Prideaux's Connection of Old and New Testament*. Vol. I. page 4. Folio. *Vid. Vitring. Comment. in Jesai.*

¹ Ifai. viii. 7, 8. So the Temple is called *HIS Temple*, Mal. iii. 1. He is said, by St. *John*, to come to his *OWN*, John i. 11. with the same Propriety as *Judea* is elsewhere called the *Land of the Lord*, Ifai. xiv. 2.

^m There were three Degrees of that Captivity; the first by *Tiglathpileser*, the second by *Shalmaneser*, and the third by *Esharaddon*; which last was just sixty five Years after the Prophecy of *Isaiab*. See *Dean Prideaux's Connection*, page 24. Folio. Vol. I.

Affyria? What therefore had they to plead against so clear an Example? *Berriman. Sermon VII.* Why, it seems they had a Promise of Continuation, which the other Tribes had not; and this seems to have been the Ground of their Assurance, that their City should not be overthrown by the *Chaldeans*.

THIS, indeed, the Prophets themselves seem to have regarded as a considerable Difficulty; and therefore they are very large and express in their Promises of Restoration; and withal, the End of this Captivity is signified to be not a total Dereliction of the Land, but only for giving it that Time of Rest which the People had sacrilegiously withheld, by intermitting their *Sabbatic Years*. *Isaiah*, near two hundred Years beforehand, named the very Person who should order their Enlargement, and *Jeremiah* pointed out the Year for doing it, and made Purchase of a Field himself, to give Proof of his Assurance that *Houses, and Fields, and Vineyards, should be possess'd again in that Land*: Their Genealogies were preserved, and the Gift of Prophecy continued, to assure them of Deliverance, lest the Minds, even of faithful Men, should be over-born or perplex'd, if not duly arm'd and forewarn'd of the Removal of so shocking a Dispensation. So that though God might make a full End of other Nations, yet would he not make a full End of them, but having corrected them in measure, would be sure to perform his good Word towards them, in causing them to return, and giving them an expected End. What, was this good Word to be performed to *Judah*, more than to the other Tribes? What was this End and Expectation, (as the Hebrew Phrase is) which God thought himself concerned to fulfil? Namely, that their external Polity and Regiment should not be utterly dissolved, till that promised Restorer should appear, in whom all Nations were to receive a Benediction. The Restoration of the Kingdom to the House of *David* was consequential to his Coming, when the external Dominion of that Family was in its typical View to be accomplish'd, by the internal and spiritual Government of the *Messiah*. But the Continuation of some external Form of Government was necessary in the mean Time, till this End and Expectation should come: And upon what can that Necessity be so rationally founded, as on this Prophecy of *Jacob*, which assures the Scepter and Law-giver to *Judah*, till *Shiloh* should appear? It may be added, that even during their Captivity at *Babylon*, they seem to have had some Exercise of Government allowed them, and to have had Justice administer'd according to the Law, by Judges and Elders of their ownⁿ.

THE last Words of the Verse, — *And to him shall the Gathering of the People be*, have been differently referr'd either to *Judah*, who received this Benediction, or to *Shiloh*, who was the principal Part of the Benediction itself. They who take it in the former Acceptation, do explain this *Gathering of the People*, to denote the resorting of some Persons out of all the other Tribes to *Judah*, so as to be included in one Body with it, denominated from it, and subject to the Form of Government obtaining in it^o. And this, there is no doubt, began to be the Case, at the Time of the Defection of the ten Tribes, when there was a Remnant out of all the Tribes of *Israel*, adhering to the House of *David*: But appeared more eminently after the Captivity, when People of all Tribes had Leave given to return, no more divided into two Kingdoms, but incorporated in one Nation of the *Jews*. But if we look on this Prediction, in the Notion before given, as conveying that Part of the Blessing of *Abraham* which concerns the promised Seed, I conceive there will be better Reason for interpreting that last Clause of it in the other Acceptation. The Blessing of *Abraham's Seed* had been promised to extend to all Nations of the Earth. And so here *Jacob* foretels the Gathering of the People, or Nations, unto that Seed, their Collection and Incorporation into one Body with him, in order to receive their Benediction. And this, I think, suits better with the Mind of the *Seventy*^p, who are follow'd in this Matter by the *Syriac* Interpreter, and the vulgar *Latin*, that he should

VOL. III.

(8 C)

ⁿ See Bishop *Sherlock's* third Dissertation, page 329, &c.

^o See Bishop *Sherlock's* third Dissertation,

page 321, &c.

^p *ἡ αὐτὴ πρὸς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν* Sept. *וְלִיה נִסְכּוֹן עַמְמָא* Syr. Et ipse erit expectatio Gentium. Vulg. Lat.

Berriman.
Sermon
VII.

Isai ii. 2.
xlii. 4.
Jx. 5.

be the Expectation of the Gentiles, or Nations; which cannot well be applied to the Person or Tribe of *Judah*, but seems clearly to refer to those Characters of the *Messiah*, which we shall see to be frequent in the following Prophets, that the *Isles* should wait for his Law, that the Abundance of the Sea should be converted, and all Nations should flow unto him. And because this Gathering was understood to be an Act of Submission, agreeably to the Predictions, that occurred in After-times, of the universal Reign and Empire of *Messiah*, from hence the *Chaldee* Paraphrast has more fully explain'd it.— Until *Messiah* come, whose is the Kingdom, and him the Nations shall obey. Or if by the People we would choose to understand those of the twelve Tribes of *Israel*; (though I think the Word *קָמַי* in the Plural, is rarely used in that Acceptation) as they were literally gather'd into one Kingdom, or Nation, against the coming of their King *Messiah*; so they have been shewn, in their typical Capacity, to represent the Church of Christ gather'd out of all Nations; which still gives us the same View of this Prediction, as conveying, in its full Extent, the Promise which was made to *Abraham*.

Thus far the Spirit of Prophecy had gone in fixing the Line of that blessed Seed, which was to come for the Redemption of Mankind from Sin and Misery. That Deliverer, which had been originally promised to spring of human Race, was now pointed out to a distinct Nation, and a Tribe of that Nation, tho' not without express Declaration, that all other Nations were to have their Interest and Claim to him. There were still many Points relating to his Office and Character, which remained to be gradually cleared up in future Times: And this was to be done partly under Types and Figures, and partly by express Predictions. For as it is not agreeable to the Method of Divine Revelation, to open every Thing at once, but to keep Men in constant Expectation by a gradual Increase and Addition of new Light; so neither was it necessary that the Revelations which were made, should appear in their whole Latitude and Extent to every inattentive Auditor, at the Time of their Delivery: It was enough that they who meditated on the Scriptures, and made them Matter of their daily Study and Exercise, were able to derive some glimmering Light and Direction from them, till their final Accomplishment should fix their Interpretation in the clearest manner, and display the Harmony and Beauty of the whole Oeconomy.

As then it was observed, that the Seed of *Abraham*, according to the Flesh, did figure out his spiritual Seed to be gather'd out of all Nations into one Body in Christ; so it is reasonable to believe, that God's external Dispensations of Favour towards them, should be intended to foreshew his future Dispensations of Grace and Mercy manifested to his Church. Their Slavery in *Egypt* did fitly figure out that spiritual Servitude and Bondage into which Mankind are sunk by their Apostasy; and in Proportion hereunto, their Deliverance from it was a significant Type or Emblem of that Redemption which was expected from the promised Seed. The *Paschal Sacrifice*, instituted upon that Occasion, was meant to foreshew the Method of effecting such Redemption by the Sacrifice and Death of Christ. And though the whole Analogy of that ritual Service might not appear with all that Beauty and Advantage, as it does since the Accomplishment, yet there is little doubt but the holy Men of old saw through it some Gleams and Dawnings of the Gospel Light, and understood it to point yet more directly to the same End with other Sacrifices. Without such Interpretation St. *John the Baptist* must have spoke an unintelligible Language, when he pointed out *Jesus* as that Lamb of God, which taketh away the Sin of the World. The like is to be said of that Body of *Mosaick* Precepts, which was shortly after deliver'd from Mount *Sinai*, where the whole external Discipline, however it might be necessary to exercise the Men of gross and carnal Views, yet could not of itself conduct to any spiritual Advantages, except it was referred by a mystical Interpretation to the inward Discipline of Christ, those spiritual Aids and Privileges to be dispensed by him. But of this I may have Occasion to say more hereafter.

John i. 29.

SERMON

עַר רִיחַ מְשִׁיחָא דְּרִיחַ הִיא מְלִכְתָּא וְלִיחַ יִשְׁתַּמְשֵׁן עַמְמֵי־א

S E R M O N V I I I.

The Promises made to *Abraham* and his Seed.

Preached, *November* the 2d, 1730.

The Third S E R M O N on this T E X T.

G A L. iii. 16.

Now to Abraham and his Seed were the Promises made. He saith not, and to Seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy Seed, which is Christ.

HAVING already seen how the *natural Seed* of *Abraham*, in the Line Berriman. Sermon VIII. of *Isaac*, was fixed for the Descent of the *Messiah*, that *blessed Seed* which had been promised from the Beginning as the Rescuer of Mankind from the miserable Effects of their Apostasy, and was at the same Time typical of that collective Body to be gathered by him out of *all Nations*, and reputed for that *spiritual Seed* intitled to the Blessing which was promised through him to extend to *all Nations* of the Earth; it was natural from all this to conclude, that the external Dispensations of Providence to this chosen People, which were a literal Completion of the temporal Covenant, had a farther, *i. e.* mystical Respect to that *everlasting Covenant* with *all Nations*, and were figurative of God's future Dealings with his Church through Christ. Their tedious Passage through a barren Wilderness, before they arrived at the Land of Promise, was apt enough to figure out our Pilgrimage and Travel through the Cares and Temptations of this mortal Life, before we can reach to our promised Inheritance, that Haven of eternal Glory where we would be. The divers Casualties, which befel them in that Passage, are reckoned by *St. Paul* to have happened unto them for *Types* or *Ensamples*, and to be written for our *Admonition*, upon 1 Cor. x. 6, 11. whom the *Ends of the World* are come, that *End* of all the divine Counsels and Dispensations towards Man, which relate to his Recovery by the promised Redeemer, that *last Period of Time* which the Prophets had prefixed to be under his more immediate Conduct and Direction. Thus their *Murmuring*, in Num. xxi. 5, 6. particular, was punished with the Biting of *fiery Serpents*, to remind them of that Deceit and Seduction of the *old Serpent* which brought Sin into the World, and of the deadly Effects and Consequences of it. And when the Malady was healed by *looking up* to that *brazen Serpent*, which was erected on a Pole, to make it visible over the Camp of *Israel*, this fitly signified our Ver. 9. looking by Faith to that Redeemer who was *lifted up* upon the Cross, to draw all

Berriman. Sermon VIII. *all Men unto him, and was thereby set (as the Prophet Isaiah expresses it by the same Word in the Original) for an Ensign to the People, or Nations, whereunto the Gentiles are to seek.* And tho' it cannot be said, that the *Jews* ever understood this Sign in that whole Compass and Latitude in which our blessed Saviour has explained it, yet it is certain, they understood a mystical Meaning to be concealed under it*, and the Prophet *Isaiah* very probably referr'd to it in the Passage above mentioned, which clearly belongs to *Christ*.

John xii. 32. *Isaiah xi. 10, 12.* *וְנִתְּנָה לְעֵלְיָהוּ*
John iii. 14. IT has been shewn formerly, that there was no Necessity the whole Meaning of any Type or Prediction should appear when it was first delivered. There might be wise Reasons why God should couch his Oracles in such Terms, as might be but partly understood at first, and gradually open more and more, as the Time of Accomplishment drew nearer on. This would both impart a comfortable Direction to the ancient Ages, and add the strongest Light and Confirmation to those who lived after the Completion.

BUT what is most material to be observed on this Occasion, is the Dispensation of the Law delivered from Mount *Sinai*, which, besides those civil or political Precepts that were necessary to the good Order of a national Establishment, contained, moreover, many ritual Injunctions, and particularly such as related to the publick Worship, which (whatever other special Regards may be assigned for some of them) were generally intended as preparatory to the Gospel Revelation, and prefigurative of the mighty Privileges designed to be conferred under it. Thus the Tabernacle itself, with all its Utenfils, and the whole Apparatus of its ritual Worship, its Altar, its Priests, its Sacrifices and Purgations, are understood to be only Shadows of good Things to come; whereas the Body is of *Christ*, the Substance referred to by those Shadows is to be sought for only in the *Christian* Dispensation. The singular Exactness with which God was pleased to prescribe these Matters to *Moses*, even in the minutest Circumstances, and his raising up of Men inspired to perform the very Workmanship on that Occasion, affords a strong Presumption, that those outward Services had some higher and more important End in View, than what appeared from the bare Letter of the Institution. Their Unaptness of themselves for any spiritual Efficacy, is, moreover, a substantial Argument, that they who used them were not to rest in the Letter of such ritual Observances, but whilst they could sanctify only to the purifying of the *Flesh*, had only an outward and symbolical Effect, in continuing or restoring to them the Privilege of outward Worship, ought to direct their View to the Mystery concealed under them, which, by an inward Efficacy, might purge their very Consciences from dead Works, to serve the living God.

THESE were such Reasonings as might be obvious to serious and considering Men before the Coming of *Christ*; and though they could not make the Application with all that Lustre and Advantage which recommends it now in the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, and other Parts of the New Testament, yet they easily perceived there was some farther Design lay deeper than the Surface, which they diligently searched into, and made of it some general, though imperfect Discovery. What need had the holy Psalmist of such constant Exercise in this divine Law, as to study and meditate on it *Day and Night*, if it contained nothing more than that Description of outward Rites, which was evident at first View to any superficial Enquirer? When he pray'd to have his Eyes opened, that he might behold wondrous Things out of that Law; can it be imagined, that he was not sensible of some mystical and secret Meaning that lay concealed under the Letter, and was then in some measure discoverable by diligent Study and divine Illumination? When he affirms, that he had more Understanding than all his Teachers, and ascribes it to this Study or Meditation of the divine Testimonies, is it not reasonable to believe, that whilst they (carnal Men) rested in the literal Precepts, and looked no deeper than the Surface of outward Ordinances, he (with a nobler Genius, and more pious Disposition) searched

* *Vid. Buxtorf. Exercit. 6. de Serpente Aeneo. c. 5.*

searched into their latent and typical Respects, and so, through the Clouds and Shadows of the *Law*, perceived the Dawning and Glimmering of *Gospel* Light?

Berriman.
Sermon
VIII.

IT is not to be pretended, that he saw the whole of that stupendous Oeconomy, which is involved in the Types and Figures of the Old Testament: But he saw enough for the Support of his Faith, and to make him eagerly desirous of searching deeper. It is thus our Saviour remarks, *That many Prophets, and Kings, and righteous Men, had desired to see those Things which were seen by his Disciples*; and St. Peter, *that the ancient Prophets had enquired and searched diligently what, or what Manner of Time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the Sufferings of Christ, and the Glory that should follow*. They saw enough to excite their Admiration, and to quicken their Desire: But for the rest, it is no Wonder, if, after the Accomplishment of Things, the Application is become more easy and natural, and the Beauty of the former Dispensation is displayed with more Advantage; if some Things that beforehand might look harsh and incongruous, and next to impossible, are shewn in the Event to be consistent and natural, and every way suitable to the divine Oeconomy.

Matt. xiii.
17.
Luke x.
24.
1 Pet. i.
10, 11.

THE People of the *Israelites*, as distinct and separate from all other People, was observed to represent the *Christian* Church gathered out of *all Nations*, to receive the Benefit of the promised Redemption, as distinguished from those who should reject and oppose it, and chuse to persist in their Apostasy. From hence it is natural to expect, that the *Law*, which was given to them in this typical Relation, should refer to something of a higher Concern in the future Dispensation; and that consequently when such typical Relation ceased, and the *spiritual Israel* succeeded in their Room, then the external Use of those Ordinances, having reached its End, could be no longer necessary; which, indeed, were many of them of such kind, as shewed them to be only calculated for the Tract of *Canaan*, and could not be punctually observed throughout the whole World.

IN this View, the *Law* was a standing Prophecy of *Christ*. But because I have Thoughts of considering that Matter more distinctly, and at large, before the Conclusion of these Lectures^b, I forbear to pursue it any farther in this Place, and would chuse rather to employ the Remainder of our Time at present, in considering one or two express Predictions of *Christ* during this Time of their Journey in the Wilderness.

ONE is that remarkable one of *Moses*, in the eighteenth Chapter of *Deuteronomy*, which is often referred to in the New Testament as foretelling, and accomplished in, *Jesus*. *The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet, from the Midst of thee, of thy Brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken*. And again, repeating the Terms of the divine Promise to the same Purpose: *I will raise them up a Prophet from among their Brethren, like unto thee, and will put my Words in his Mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him; and it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my Words which he shall speak in my Name, I will require it of him*.

John i.
45.
Acts iii.
22.
vii. 37.
Deut.
xviii. 15,
18, 19.

I KNOW it has been thought by very learned Men, that this Prediction relates to a Succession of *Prophets* to arise among the *Jews*, in order to instruct them from Time to Time in the Divine Will; though it may be more eminently applicable to the *Messiah*, as greater than the rest, and coming on Business of more Importance. But if it be not singly understood of him, I doubt it would be difficult to convince a *Jew*, or other Unbeliever, of the Necessity of such eminent Application: If *Prophets* of a lower Character be confessedly included, they would hardly think themselves concerned to look out for any other, as appears by the Use which *R. Lipman*, and some others, have made of this Construction. Let it then be our Enquiry, what Ground there may be for such Interpretation; and whether that, or ours, does most naturally flow from a View of the Passage in Dispute.

Berriman.
Sermon
VIII.

Deut.
xviii. 10,
14.

W H A T has been thought to give Colour to this Conceit, is the Prohibition contain'd in the next preceding Paragraph, of consulting *Wizards*, and *Diviners*, or suffering such to live among them, as was practis'd by the Nations of *Canaan*; in lieu of which it is supposed, God would raise up an Order of *Prophets* of their own, who should suffice to answer all their Exigences: Whereas it is thought this Connection would be lost, if God were supposed to promise only *one Prophet* many hundred Years after, which could be no Remedy against their resorting to heathen Sorcerers for present Use and Satisfaction.

I A M far from thinking, that those learned Persons who advanced this Notion, had any Eye to those profane Consequences which have been drawn from it. But a late great Champion for Infidelity has ventured roundly to espouse them; and depreciate the Character of the ancient *Prophets*, as an Order of Men, meerly answerable to the *Heathen Diviners*, whose Business it was to get a Livelihood, either in *Money* or *Victuals*, by *telling Fortunes*, and helping People to *lost Goods*.

B U T is this Interpretation supported by Fact and Reality? In the first Place, I look upon it as no slight Prejudice against the Whole of it, that there does not appear to have been any constant and uninterrupted *Succession* of *Prophets* constituted among the *Jews*; but they were an Order of Men, extraordinarily raised up, as God saw fit, or some particular Emergency of their Affairs furnished Occasion for them. Therefore if *one* future *Prophet* could not answer the Design of this Prediction, neither could that *Succession* of *Prophets*, which was not continued, but admitted of many Gaps and Intermissions.

I N the next Place, by whom was this Author taught, that there was such exact Analogy between the Office of the *Jewish Prophets* and the *Heathen Diviners*? or what Ground had he to think, that the former were a meer Set of *Fortune-tellers* established in the *Jewish Commonwealth*? and that, when all Application to the latter was forbidden in such Terms of Detestation, God should still continue the same Thing to his own People under another Name? or grant the Inspiration of his holy Spirit to indulge the superstitious Usages and Disposition of the Multitude? Is there any Thing to support this wild Imagination in the *Jewish History*? Nothing like it. During the Life of *Moses*, and from him to *Samuel*, (a Space of near four hundred Years) there is no Instance pretended. What is afterwards delivered, concerns usually the publick State and Condition of the Kingdom, which God was engaged by Covenant to support and uphold, or else the Morals or Religion of the People. And if there be two or three Examples of Matters of more private Concern, (as in the Case of *Saul's* Asses, the Recovery of *Jeroboam's* Son, and of *Abaziah* and *Benhadad*) yet they plainly had a View to others, which were greater and more important.

1 Sam. ix.
20.
1 Kings
xiv. 5, 12.
2 Kings i.
4, 16.
viii. 10.

W H A T then could be the Ground of all that profane Sneer and Banter, with which this Author has presumed to ridicule the *Prophetick* Character? namely this, That he might vindicate the Supposition of this Paragraph's being connected with the preceding, by feigning such a Set of *Prophets* as were fit to stand in the Place of *Heathen Diviners*. So that his Argument turns plainly in a Circle: This Text must foretel a *Succession* of *Jewish Prophets*, because it is connected with the general Prohibition of consulting *Diviners*; and those *Jewish Prophets* must be no better than *Fortune-tellers*, because if they were, there will appear to be no Ground for such Connection.

B U T what now if we should deny the Connection of these two Paragraphs? If we should say, that this Promise of a *Prophet* has no Relation to the Prohibition of consulting *Diviners*? Surely he should have made some Proof of this Connection, before he had proceeded to build so much upon it. There is no connecting Particle in the Text to join them; and there are those who will not allow him to supply one at his Pleasure. But as the Paragraph concerning *Wizards* is not itself connected with that

which

* Grounds and Reasons, p. 28, 29. Scheme of Lit. Proph. chap. 6. § 2.

† See Mr. Bullock's Argument from Prophecy, p. 234, 240.

* Id. ibid. pag. 22.

which goes before it, concerning the *Portion* of the *Priests* and *Levites*, Berriman. Sermon VIII. so, for any Thing he offers, we are at Liberty to suppose, that neither has this Paragraph, of the *Prophet like unto Moses*, any Connection with the foregoing; and then his whole Reasoning is lost, the Passage will have an absolute and independent Sense, and remain to be interpreted from the Phrase and Import of the Text itself.

HOWEVER, in regard *Moses* makes use of the same Form of Speech in recommending this *Prophet* as he had done just before in disallowing their *Diviners*, in that the *Nations* are blamed for HEARKENING unto them^f; whereas the *Jews* are not suffered so to do, but are required to HEARKEN unto their *Prophet*^g: I am content to admit, that some sort of Opposition seems to be intended, and that the Paragraphs have Reference to one another. But then it is to be considered, that the telling private *Fortunes*, and *discovering lost Goods*, was neither the only, nor the principal Office of these *Diviners*, no, nor to foretel future Events in general, (nor is there any thing spoken of such Office in this Text of *Moses*) but to acquaint the People with the Will of their pretended Deities, and to prescribe the Rites and Offices of their Religion, such as the sacrificing of their Children, which is here particularly mentioned. And therefore it was natural enough, when *Moses* was cautioning the People against paying any Regard to these superstitious Pretenders to divine Knowledge, and forbidding the Allowance of any such to live among them; I say, it was natural to add, that from his Time they should rest satisfied with the Precepts he delivered, and wait till another *Prophet like him* should arise, to give them new Directions, to whom they were required to HEARKEN; but never to depart from the *Mosaick* Precepts upon less Authority. But either way the Phrase of that Text is not fairly applicable to a *Succession* of *Prophets*, but to one only. Verse 10.

THERE is mention of A PROPHET, in the Singular, to arise, of *Jewish* Extraction, a *Prophet from among their Brethren*^h: The Force of which Argument appears to have been well understood by those *Jews*, who have supposed *Joshua* or *Jeremy* to be here intended. And though this general Description does not certainly point out the very Person intended, but contains a Character common to many of their Prophets, yet it does, in its literal and obvious Meaning, so evidently belong to some one of the Number, (and who that one should be, remains to be learned from other Circumstances) that one would wonder to see those who profess such Adherence to the literal Senseⁱ desert it in this Instance, for the sake of understanding a *Succession* of *Prophets*, which, to be sure, is not literally mention'd, and cannot, without Violence, be supported by a Figure.

FOR the better Distinction of that *Prophet*, there is this Note or Criterion in the Text, that he should be *like unto Moses*; no vulgar Character, be sure; not common to the whole *Succession* of *Prophets*; nor yet due to any one of those in the Old Testament; if we judge by the Preference which God himself gave to *Moses*, upon Occasion of the Contest which *Aaron* and *Miriam* had with him for Pre-eminence, *If there be a Prophet among you, (says God) I the Lord will make myself known unto him in a Vision, and will speak unto him in a Dream. My Servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine House. With him will I speak Mouth to Mouth, even apparently, and not in dark Speeches; and the Similitude of the Lord shall he behold: Wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my Servant Moses?* Upon this Ground the *Jews* observe^k the *Mosaick* Degree of Inspiration to be greatly superior to that of any other *Prophet*. And the like Superiority is confirmed by this Note in the Conclusion Numb. xii. 6, 7, 8.

^f Verse 14. הגוים האלה אל מעננים ואל קסמים ישמעו

^g Verse 15. האיש אשר לא ישמע אדרש מעמו אליו תשמעון Verse 19. האיש אשר לא ישמע אדרש מעמו

^h Vid. Meinhart. Dissert. ad loc. in Theol. Philol. Vol. I. ⁱ It is said, that by *literal Sense* in this Controversy, is meant the *primary* Sense, in Opposition to *typical* or *allegorical*. Scheme of *Literal Proph.* chap. 6. § 2. But for the same Reason that Author should exclude all figurative Senses, when there is no Inconvenience in a close Adherence to the Letter. ^k See Smith's Select Discourses.

Berriman. clusion of the Book of *Deuteronomy*, which is most probably thought to have
Sermon been added by *Ezra*, at the closing of the sacred Canon after the *Babylonish*
VIII. Captivity. *There arose not a Prophet since in Israel, like unto Moses, whom the*
Lord knew Face to Face; in all the Signs and Wonders which the Lord sent him
Deut. *to do in the Land of Egypt, to Pharaoh, and to all his Servants, and to all his*
xxxiv. 10. *Land, and in all that mighty Hand, and in all the great Terror which Moses*
11, 12. *shewed in the Sight of all Israel.*

THE Prophet, therefore, *like unto Moses*, must be one who was superior to all that had appeared from his Days to the Time of *Ezra*, one who equalled at least (and we may add, exceeded) *Moses*, in the Frequency and Freedom of his Intercourse with God, in the Greatness of that *Salvation* and Deliverance wrought out by him, in the Promulgation of *Laws* for the Order and Government of this *chosen People*, and in the Number and Nature of those Miracles which gave Testimony to his Mission. For though a late Author pretends that the *Likeness to Moses* in this Text was the common Character of all the Prophets, as being all *inspired, and equally sent of God*¹, whereas their *Unlikeness* in the other Text lay only in the Manner of their Revelation, and the Number of their Miracles; yet, I think, whoever considers both impartially, cannot fail concluding that the *Likeness of one Prophet* is laid down as a Note of Distinction, to discern him from other *Prophets* who were *not like*. So that this Character does not only restrain the Prediction of *Moses* to some single *Prophet*, but to him who was to be the *greatest* of all the *Prophets*, even to that *blessed Seed* which had been promised from the Beginning. Which Answer at the same Time defeats those *Jewish* Expositions, that would make this Character explanatory of the former, that the Prophet should be of their Brethren, as *Moses* was, therefore faithful, fit to be trusted, duly authorized, and the like^m.

ANOTHER Character which God inserts in this Prediction of a Future *Prophet*, is this: — *And I will put my Words in his Mouth, and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him.* It was, no doubt, as the same Author remarksⁿ, the common Character of all the *Prophets* to deliver the *Words* or Messages of God. But if we view this Character in Connection with those that went before, of *one certain Prophet* in the Singular, and him eminently resembling *Moses*, there will be reason to conclude, that it refers in this Place to his Delivery and Promulgation of a *new Law*, or (which comes to the same) a new Method of stating the Terms of Man's Acceptance with God, in virtue of an extraordinary Commission delegated to him to that purpose. So we may observe that the Ten Commandments deliver'd from Mount *Sinai*, are more emphatically styled the *ten Words*, and are accordingly introduced with this Preface, — *God spake these Words and said.* Now to which of the *Prophets*, between *Moses* and our blessed Saviour, could this Character be fairly applied? It was confessedly their Business to explain and inculcate the *Law of Moses*, to open indeed more expressly its spiritual Design and Meaning, as more important than the literal, in order to prepare them for the Change that was intended; but still to enforce it, when so explained; and understood, and remind the People of the Duty of obeying it? But it was singularly foretold as the Office of *Messiah*, to prescribe them a new *Law* or *Covenant*; not according to the *Covenant made with their Fathers*, which, in its literal Acceptation, was calculated only for a single Nation or People, but such as should extend to *all Nations* of the Earth, and for which *the Isles of the Gentiles* were to wait.

I KNOW some *Christian* Divines are unwilling to speak of *Christ* under the Title of a *Law-giver*. But they must own him to be *Mediator* of the *spiritual Covenant*, as *Moses* of the *ritual*, and authorized to declare the Mind or Will of God concerning it. And since this is call'd a *Law* both in the Old and New

¹ Scheme of Lit. Proph. chap. 6. § 2.
Theaur. Theol. Philol. Vol. I.

^m Vid. *Minbart.* in *Dissert. ad loc.* cap. 1. § 11. in
ⁿ Lit. Scheme, chap. 6. § 2.

New Testament, whatever be the Import of that Term, I hope we may have Leave to use it as the Scripture has done, and make it the Ground of a Comparison between *Christ* and *Moses*. To this the Text we are considering manifestly leads us, which, you may observe, has very plain Reference to the Promulgation of the *Law* from Mount *Horeb*, — *According to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb, in the Day of the Assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the Voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great Fire any more, that I die not. And the Lord said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their Brethren, like unto thee.* *Moses* had often spoken to them in the Name of God, and there was nothing shocking or terrible in his Appearance. But when the *Law* was deliver'd, God spake with the tremendous Pomp and Ministry of *Angels*, with *Thundrings* and *Lightnings*, the *Noise* of a *Trumpet*, and the *Mountain smoking*. This struck such Terror in the People, that they *removed and stood afar off*; they wanted (even on the most august Occasions, as well as those of common Exigence) to have one speak to 'em in their own Form and Nature, who might not terrify them with his Presence, nor amaze them with his Voice; they said therefore unto *Moses*, *Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die.* It was in answer to this that God was pleased to declare, he would deal with 'em, in Time to come, according to their Request; no more issue out his *Laws* with such Circumstances of Terror and Amazement, but put his *Words* into the Mouth of a *Prophet*, who should be like unto *Moses* in Nature and in Office, to deliver his Precepts in the tenderest and most endearing Manner. Agreeably to this does the Apostle state the Difference between the Methods of delivering the *Law* and the *Gospel*. *For ye are not come (says he) unto the Mount that might be touched, (viz. not under Pain of Death) and that burned with Fire, nor unto Blackness, and Darkeness, and Tempest, and the Sound of a Trumpet, and the Voice of Words; which Voice they that heard intreated that the Word should not be spoken to them any more. — But ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the City of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, — to Jesus the Mediator of the NEW COVENANT, &c.* From all this we have Reason to conclude, that the *Words* put into the Mouth of this *Prophet*, were to be *Words* of the new *Law* or Dispensation, which should differ from the old one in the Circumstance of its Delivery: And this can agree to nothing else but the *Law* of the *Messiah*.

AGAINST this it is suggested, that the *Israelites* having then no Expectation of a new *Law*, their Desire in this Place could relate only to *Prophets* rais'd up under the old one: And if God's Answer implies a Condescension to their Request, it must be understood under the same Restriction. I answer, whether they expected any new *Law* or not, they could not tell but God might think fit to give one. Again, their Desire, tho' not precisely determin'd to the Delivery of a new *Law*, yet plainly reached to it, that God would on the greatest Occasions, as well as in Matters of ordinary Occurrence, speak to them by the Ministry of *Moses*, and no more issue his Voice out of the Fire: To which God answers, that he would hereafter raise up one like *Moses*, to deliver his *Words*. Accordingly *Messiah's* Office is described by *Isaiab*, (the *Jews* themselves confessing it) to *preach good Tidings to the Meek, and proclaim the acceptable Year of the Lord*; and it appears from the Discourse of the *Woman of Samaria*, that a fuller and more ample Revelation was expected from him, That when he came, he should *tell all Things*.

LASTLY, It is added in the Conclusion of this remarkable Prediction, — *Who-soever will not hearken unto my Words, which he [that Prophet] shall speak in my Name, I will require it of him.* Which is a plain Commination of Divine Vengeance, against all those who should reject or refuse to obey so great a *Prophet*. Now, tho' it is true that Disobedience to God's Messages by any of his *Prophets*, would be highly criminal and deserving of his Displeasure; yet

VOL. III.

(8 E)

since

* Lit. Scheme, *ut supr.*p Vide. *Meinhart. ut supr.*Berriman.
Sermon
VIII.Deut.
xviii. 16,
17, 18.Exod. xx.
18.

Verse 19:

Heb. xii.
18.Isai. lxi.
1, 2.John iv.
25.

Berriman.
Sermon
VIII.

since there is no other of whom it is thus singularly foretold, we have Grounds to argue from hence, that this must be the greatest of all the Prophets, and consequently the *Messiah*. No ordinary Chastisement is design'd by this Expression, but the inflicting of direful and heavy Vengeance. For as God is said to *hold* them *guilty*, whose Offence is of a gross and aggravated Kind; so is he said to *require* it of them, whose Guilt is ripe for Vengeance, and ready to receive its final Punishment. And this was so remarkably fulfill'd on the whole Nation of the *Jews*, from the Age in which *Jesus* was crucified among them, that the Application makes itself, and proves the Point without Enlargement.

SUCH is the Description of the *Prophet like to Moses*; and such the Danger of neglecting to obey him. But because vain Men might arrogate to themselves a Pretence of such Commission, and take upon them to speak without being sent; it was very proper to subjoin a Sentence of Excision to deter Men from such audacious Wickedness. *But the Prophet which shall presume to speak a Word in my Name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or that shall speak in the Name of other Gods, even that Prophet shall die.* And then for the People, who might be doubtful in such Cases, and not well able to examine the Grounds of their Pretences, it is added, that they should look to the Sign which should be given in proof of such Commission. *When a Prophet speaketh in the Name of the Lord, if the Thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the Thing which the Lord hath not spoken, but the Prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: Thou shalt not be afraid of him.*

Deut.
xviii. 20.

Ver. 22.

FROM hence some have objected, that the *Prophet like Moses* could not be the Character of a single Person, because the Rule laid down for trying his Credentials is levelled against the Pretenders to Prophecy in all Ages. And the Penalty prescribed for the *false Prophet*, must be calculated with a general View, and could never be designed for *Jesus*, nor have any relation to him: Therefore it is argued the *Prophet* here must mean the *Succession of Prophets* in future Times; and here was a Criterion given at all Times to distinguish between *true* and *false*. But there is plainly no Consequence in this Reasoning, because the Rule given manifestly was not meant to attest the Mission of the *true Prophet*, but only to detect the Imposture of a *false* one. And therefore though *Jesus*, who was the *true Prophet*, could not be concerned in the Penalty of *Imposture*; yet it might be of Use to detect and punish all *Impostors*, that no one might pass for the *true Prophet* before he really came. It was not necessary for all the Prophets to produce Signs or Miracles in Proof of their Mission, but only when the Matter of their Message was something new or extraordinary; and consequently this could be no general Trial of Prophets in all Ages. But since the *Messiah* was expected to work great Miracles, and others, besides the *true* one, might assume the Character, this would be a proper Conclusion or Trial of their several Claims; and it was therefore very just and natural, even after this Notice of a single Prophet, to caution the People against bold Pretenders, and prescribe them some Rule or Token for trying and detecting them. It is the Discovery of *Imposture* which is here provided for, of which there might be Danger in all Ages; although the real Completion of the Promise could be but once, and in one single Person.

UPON the Whole, the Argument from this Prophecy is clear and conclusive, and when it was argued by St. *Peter*, and St. *Stephen* in the *Acts*, the *Jews* had no Objection that we find to make against it; which they could never have wanted, if this Description had then been understood to belong in common to the whole Order of Prophets, or could fairly be applied to *Joshua*, or *Jeremy*, or any else that appeared within the Compass of the Old Testament.

HAVING thus far stated and consider'd the Prediction of a *Prophet like unto Moses*, and justified the Application of it singly to *Christ*, there is but one more Prediction I would propose at present to consider; and that is the Prophecy

Prophecy of *Balaam*, in which I shall pass over those Parts which are more disputable, as being couched in more ambiguous Terms, and fix only upon that Part of it, which I take to contain the more immediate Character of *Christ*. *There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Scepter shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the Corners of Moab, and destroy all the Children of Sheth.* That these Words relate to some eminent Person to arise among the *Israelites* many Ages afterwards, may be gathered from the Preface introducing them: *I shall see him, but not now: I shall behold him, but not nigh.* And then there can be little Doubt, but it should be the same Person, who is described by the other Prophets under the same Character of *Light* and *Glory*, and as holding the *Scepter* and *Reins of Government*, both for the Protection of his faithful People, and the Confusion of his Enemies. This is so well understood by the *Jews*, that not only the *Chaldee Paraphrast* of old, but even their later *Expositors*, (notwithstanding all their Prejudice) and *Maimonides* himself, the most judicious Collector of their numerous Traditions, have acknowledged the *Messiah* to be clearly pointed out in some of the Phrases of this Text ⁹.

Berriman.
Sermon
VIII.Numb.
xxiv. 17.

THE *Corner* of a Place is an usual Figure, put in Scripture, for the Part of greatest Strength and Ornament; and therefore, by the *Corners of Moab*, in this Passage, the *Chaldee Paraphrast*, and the *Seventy Interpreters*, have not unfitly understood the *Princes* of that Country. Which Sense will be the rather confirmed, if we suppose *Balaam* here to allude to that proverbial Expression which is cited a few Chapters before. *There is a Fire gone out of Heshbon, a Flame from the City of Sibon, it hath consumed Ar of Moab, and the LORDS of the High-places of Arnon.* And that such Allusion ought to be supposed, will appear highly reasonable, when it is farther considered, that the Prophet *Jeremy* has joined the Phrase of both Passages together: — *But Fire shall come forth out of Heshbon, and a Flame from the midst of Sibon, and shall devour the Corner of Moab, and the Crown of the Head of the tumultuous Ones.* Where the Affinity in the *Hebrew* is greater than can be shewn in our Translation ^r.

Numb.
xxi. 28.Jerem.
xlviii. 45.

BUT then as it has often been observed that the People of *Israel*, nationally considered, did typify or figure out the Spiritual *Israel of God*, that Church which was in due Time to be gathered out of *all Nations*, and substituted in the room of *Israel*; so here the *Moabites*, as they were Enemies of that peculiar People, and at this Time, particularly, creating Troubles and Difficulties to them, must in Proportion be understood to prefigure all those Enemies of the Church of *Christ*, who refuse to submit to his Authority, and would not that he should reign over them.

THERE is somewhat more Variety in accounting what should be meant in the next Clause by the *Children of Sheth*. But if we consider that it was *Seth*, the Son of *Adam*, from whom *Noah*, and consequently all the World after the Flood, descended, they will appear to have judged most reasonably in the Matter, who understand the *Children of Sheth* to take in the whole Race of Mankind, or (as the *Targum* has explained it) *all the Children of Men*. The only Difficulty then will be to account in what Sense the *Messiah* is said to DESTROY *all the Children of Sheth*, in this extensive Acceptation. For if his Kingdom be erected over the Sons of Men, it may be pertinently asked, what Sort of Kingdom that can be, where all the Subjects are destroy'd? or how this can be consistent with the End of his Office, which is to save and redeem?

⁹ Abendana in Miclol. Jophi. Maimon. Hal. Melach. chap. xi. § 1.

^r It may be proper to place the three Texts in one View, and leave them to the Judgment of the learned Reader.

Numb. xxi. 28.

Numb. xxiv. 17.

Jer. xlviii. 45.

כִּי אֵשׁ יֵצֵא מִחֶשְׁבֹן לְהַבִּיחַ
מִקְרִית סִיחַן אֲכָלָה עַר מוֹאֵב
בְּעֵלֵי כְמוֹת אֲרֹנָן

וּמִחֶזֶק פֶּאֶתִי מוֹאֵב וְקִקְרָר כָּל
בְּנֵי שֵׁת

כִּי אֵשׁ יֵצֵא מִחֶשְׁבֹן וּלְהַבִּיחַ
מִכֵּין סִיחַן וְתֹאכַל פֶּאֶת מוֹאֵב
וְקִקְרָר בְּנֵי שֵׁחֹן

Berriman. redeem? But there are two Things to be offered for our Satisfaction in this particular; either, 1. That the Word here rendered *destroy*¹, does also signify to rule, or have Dominion, (and so it is taken by the *Chaldee* Paraphrast already mentioned; *He shall RULE over all the Children of Men*;) or else, 2. That the Destruction here threatened should reach no farther than to secure their Subjection to him²; that whilst it tended to the utter Ruin and Confusion of all such as were too proud to submit, it should stop in subduing only the Corruptions, and changing the Minds and Dispositions of the rest; *Spoiling*, on the one hand, as well the *Principalities and Powers* of Darkness, as all those among the *Sons of Men*, who are confederated with them; but purging the mean while the rest from their Impurities, *casting down* all vain *Imaginations*, or carnal Reasonings, *and every high Thing that exalteth itself against the Knowledge of God, and bringing into Captivity every Thought to the Obedience of Christ*. And this seems to be confirmed by the Reading of the Prophet *Jeremy* abovementioned, where instead of וקרקר כל בני שת (which are the Words of *Balaam*) *and he shall destroy all the Children of Sheth*, we read with a small Variation of the Characters, וקרקר בני שאון *and the Crown of the Head of the Children of Tumult*, or *tumultuous Ones*; which may well describe the towering Pride of Mankind, considered in a State of Corruption.

It has indeed been thought, by some judicious Expositors, that this Prediction was fulfilled in *David*, who might be fitly represented under the Figure of a *Star* and a *Scepter*, as his Reign was successful and victorious, and his Conquests particularly extended over the Land of *Moab*. But since the Prophet *Jeremy* (as we have seen) alludes to it as a Matter still future in his Time, 'tis plainly necessary to suppose it had some farther View than any Thing which had long before happened in the Time of *David*. And if moreover, in considering the Prophecies of After-times, it shall appear that these Characters are usually applied to one who should arise in later Ages, of the Family of *David*; and that *David* himself, as the chosen Head and King of that peculiar People, the Man chosen of God after his own Heart, did eminently figure out that glorious Successor, who should utterly subdue his Enemies, and reign over the whole Company of faithful Men, gathered out of all Nations, and incorporated into one Society; I say, if that should appear in our Disquisition upon other Prophecies, I see no Reason why this should not be explained conformably to them, it will at least be necessary to refer it to him in a typical View, as the Person whose Kingdom was figured out by that of *David*. And if the latter Clause be rightly understood of his *destroying* or *ruling over all the Children of Men*, it will then be impossible to apply that Part of the Character to *David* in his own Person; it will be necessary to explain it of that Son of *David*, whose Kingdom ruleth over all, and has brought in the believing Gentiles into one common Enclosure with believing Jews.

THESE Reflections would naturally lead me on into a new and different Scene of Prophecy, namely, to take a View of those Promises of the *Messiah*, which concern him in his *Regal* Character, which relate to that last Limitation of the Line from which he should descend, and propose him as the Son and Successor of *David*. Under this View the Scheme of our Redemption opens in a clearer Light, and the Prophets are large and copious in their Descriptions of the Tranquillity and Peace to be enjoyed under his auspicious Reign. But the fuller Consideration of this Matter, will be made the Subject of some following Discourses.

¹ קרקר Vid. Joh. Helv. Willemer. dissert. ad loc. in Thesaur. Theol. Philol. Vol. I.

S E R M O N IX.

Christ's Kingdom prefigured by that of *David*.

Preached, *January* the 4th, 1730-31.

The First S E R M O N on this T E X T.

LUKE i. 32, 33.

And the Lord God shall give unto him the Throne of his Father David. And he shall reign over the House of Jacob for ever; and of his Kingdom there shall be no End.

THE State of Prophecy from the Time of *Abraham*, with respect to the *Messiah*, was distinguish'd, agreeably to the Division intimated by *St. Matthew*, into three Periods, or Intervals of Time; the first of which extended from the Call of *Abraham* to the Erection of the *Jewish* Monarchy in the Royal House of *David*; the next continues from the Erection of that Kingdom, to its Ruin or Overthrow by the *Babylonish* Captivity; and the last, commencing from the Time of that Captivity, concludes with the Coming of *Jesus*, whom we assert to be the promised *Messiah*.

Berriman.
Sermon
IX.

DURING the first of these Periods, the *Messiah* was foretold in more general Terms, as coming of the *Seed of Abraham*; and as his Family increased, that Promise was restrained to the Line of *Isaac* and of *Jacob*, till upon the Constitution of the twelve Tribes, that of *Judah* was singled out to inherit this stupendous Blessing, which alone had the Promise of having its Polity continued to the Time of its Accomplishment.

MEAN while, the Advantage of his Coming was not meant to be confined within such narrow Limits: But as that People, and the Dispensations of God towards them, were designed to figure out his future Dealings with the Church of *Christ*; so the Promise is expressly made to *all Nations of the Earth*, and the literal Privileges which were conferred upon the *natural Seed*, did betoken those more sublime transcendent Privileges which belong to the *spiritual Seed* of *Abraham*, to those, who, by being incorporated into one Body under *Christ Jesus*, are properly grafted on the Stock of *Abraham*, and entitled to claim under him as Father of the Faithful.

THE next Period began with the Erection of the Kingdom in the House of *David*, and the Promise of *Christ* to descend of his Posterity, and be the Heir of his Dominions. This was the last clear Limitation God was pleased to make in the Line of the *Messiah*; and it was followed by a Series of so many

VOL. III.

(8 F)

and

Berriman. and important Prophecies relating to the Character and Advent of this Great
Sermon Deliverer, that though they throw the greatest Light upon the Christian
IX. Scheme, yet to treat of them separately and minutely, would be Matter of
 too large a Compass for my present Design, and therefore they should rather
 be reduced to some general Considerations.

THE Monarchy, indeed, was first given to *Saul*, of the Tribe of *Benjamin*;
 and that by Divine Appointment. But this being done only in Compliance
 with the ungrateful Request of an untoward People, who disdained the Me-
 thod in which God hath hitherto been pleased to govern them, and wanted
 to have their Form of Government set on the same Foot with the Nations
 round them, we are not to look upon his Reign as any Mark of the Divine
 Favour, or Prefiguration of the Benefits of the *Messiah*. God gave that King
 to them in his Anger, and took him away in his Wrath. But when *David* was
 anointed for his Successor, a Man after God's own Heart; the Spirit of the
 Lord departing from *Saul*, came upon him from that Day forward; so that in
 him and his Successors, reigning over that chosen People, we have a Type or
 Emblem of that spiritual Kingdom and Discipline of the *Messiah*, whereby he
 should govern his Elect, the Church to be gathered out of all Nations. And
 that this again may appear to be a clear Continuation of the Promise made to
Abraham, we find the very Terms repeated, and applied to this Son of
David. And Men shall be blessed in him, all Nations shall call him Blessed;
 or rather, ALL NATIONS SHALL BE BLESSED IN HIM*, and
 shall call him Blessed.

BUT though the whole Succession of Kings in the Family of *David*, was
 meant to figure out the spiritual Empire of *Christ* over his Church, yet was it
 more eminently typified in the Reign of *David* himself and of his Son *Solomon*,
 than in any other of their Successors upon the Throne of *Judah*. In their
 Time, it is observable, the People of *Israel* were united in one Body, and had
 but one King to rule over them; which did more appositely fall in with the
 prophetical Descriptions of the Days of the *Messiah*, than when, upon the
 Death of *Solomon*, ten Tribes revolted against the House of *David*, and set up
 a new King over them, whilst *Judah* only, with *Benjamin* and the *Levites*, and
 a small Remnant besides, intermixed, persevered in their Adherence to that
 Royal Family. In their Time, therefore, the Kingdom was in its most pro-
 sperous and flourishing Condition; and as the warlike Reign of *David*, did
 aptly figure out the *Messiah*, partly in a State of Struggle and Difficulty, grap-
 pling with his Enemies, and partly in his Victories and Conquest over them;
 so did the peaceful Reign of *Solomon* figure out the Glories of that Triumph
 and Tranquillity which are the proper Consequences of compleat Victory.

BOTH these are the Subjects of many rapturous Descriptions in the Book of
Psalms; and as it often happens that the immediate Occasion of those Descrip-
 tions is taken from the Type of something present, this has induced some
 Persons of a low and narrow Disposition to imagine there was nothing higher
 in View, either in the Intention of the inspired Penman, or of that holy Spirit
 by which he was conducted. But if we seriously attend to the Phrase and
 Circumstances of those Descriptions, we shall find they many Times rise higher
 than to admit an Application to any present Occurrences, and will therefore
 most reasonably be understood to have a farther Prospect to future Times,
 to those Times of the *Messiah*, to which the whole *Jewish* Oeconomy ap-
 pears to have relation.

I KNOW

* In the *Hebrew*, there is but one Nominative Case to both Verbs; ויתברכו בו כל גוים ואשרוהו and therefore the LXX has taken the Liberty to insert another for the first of them, having rendered it thus, καὶ ἐνδοξασθήσονται ἐν αὐτῷ πάντες οἱ οὐρανοὶ καὶ ἡ γῆ πάντα τὰ ὄντα μαχαρίσων αὐτόν. And all the Tribes of the Earth (or Land) shall be blessed in him: All Nations shall bless him. Which seems to refer the former Clause to the *Jews*, and the latter to the *Gentiles*. But if we consider that, ויתברכו בו is the very Style of the Blessing of *Abraham*, and that כל גוים All Nations, which is the only Nominative here expressed, is likewise joined in the same Blessing of *Abraham*, it seems very unnatural to disjoin them in this Place, and supply another Nominative, when there is none wanting: And therefore the *Chaldee* Paraphrast clearly explains it with one Nominative, that All People shall be blessed in his Merit, and shall speak good to him.

ויתברכו כבודיהכל עממא וימרו טכ ליה

I KNOW the Adversaries of our Religion reject this Way of reasoning with Scorn and Disdain, and profess themselves unconcerned whether they can fix the Meaning of such Passages, or no ^b. But *whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear*, (for they are most rebellious) I trust that to all candid and equitable Judges it will appear a reasonable Consequence, that if there was a Redeemer promised and expected from the Time of Man's Apostasy; if the Posterity of *Abraham* was chosen and their Law promulged, on purpose to keep up this Hope and Expectation, and point out the several Parts of his Office and Character; if, lastly, the national Privileges conferred on them, were figurative of the greater Privileges to be conferred by the *Messiah* on his chosen People; then the Erection of the Kingdom, no doubt, among the rest, might fitly shadow out his regal Character, and those Passages, especially, which could not be literally applied to *David* or *Solomon*, might be justly understood to have their proper Accomplishment in him. Above all, if it appears that the *Christian* Scheme does rationally account for these several Descriptions, and that that Scheme has been abundantly confirmed by Miracles, or other Evidence proper to support it; there will then remain no Doubt, with Men of humble and dispassionate Minds, but this is the true Key for interpreting those *Psalms*, and other *Prophecies*, which draw out such illustrious Characters, as cannot strictly be referred to any Thing of those Times, but waited for a future Accomplishment.

IN this manner the Apostles reasoned concerning *Christ's* Resurrection, as by a known and avowed Method of Interpretation. From that Text of *David*, *Thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell, neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see Corruption*: From this Text, I say, though spoken in the first Person, yet since it could not possibly belong to *David* in his own Person, the Apostles made no Scruple to conclude for the Necessity of *Christ's* Resurrection. Such was St. *Peter's* Argument on this Occasion; *Men and Brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the Patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his Sepulchre is with us unto this Day*: Characters which do but ill accord with the aforesaid Prophecy, if *David* were himself the Person there intended! For how should he so many Ages continue in the Grave and State of Death, who was not to be left in Hell, nor his Flesh to see Corruption? Therefore being a Prophet, (as the Apostle goes on) and knowing that God had sworn with an Oath to him, that of the Fruit of his Loins, according to the Flesh, he would raise up *Christ* to sit on his Throne, (of whom therefore, he was a lively Type, Figure, and Representation :) He seeing this before, (though he delivered the Prediction in the first Person) spake nevertheless of the Resurrection of *Christ*, that his Soul was not left in Hell, neither his Flesh did see Corruption.

IN like manner let us hear St. *Paul*; For *David* (says he) after he had served his own Generation by the Will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his Fathers, and saw Corruption: Consequently the Words are not applicable to him in his own Person: But he whom God raised again, saw no Corruption; and was therefore the only Person to whom this Prophecy can literally be applied. I say literally; because though the Person of *David* was typical of the *Messiah*, and is therefore put for him in this *Psalms*, yet the Matter of the Prediction itself, in the most strict and literal Sense, was true of the *Messiah* only. Thus did they collect the Meaning of that famous Prophecy; nor do we find that any of their Adversaries were able to gainsay them.

FOR a farther Proof of this typical Relation between *David* and *Christ*, it deserves to be considered, that he is not only promised, as the Son of *David*, to sit upon the Throne, and inherit his Authority, but he is expressly called by the Name of *David* himself. For thus, to omit such Passages as are cited to this Purpose from the Book of *Psalms*, (where King *David* might perhaps be primarily

^b Scheme of Litteral Prophecy, chap. v. § 3.

Berriman. Sermon IX. primarily intended, and the *Messiah* referred to only in a typical or secondary View, which is the Thing to be proved) we have some express Predictions in *Hosea*, *Jeremy*, and *Ezekiel*, many Years after the Death of that Royal Progenitor, concerning the Obedience which should be paid in future Times to *David their King*.

So the Prophet *Hosea*, speaking of the Restoration of *Israel* in the latter Days, says, *They shall return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their King*: And the Prophet *Jeremy* almost in the same Words, *They shall serve the Lord their God, and David their King, whom I will raise up unto them*.

The Prophet *Ezekiel* does it with more Variety of Expression; *I will set up one Shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my Servant David*; he shall feed them, and he shall be their Shepherd. And I the Lord will be their

Ezek. xxxiv. 23. God, and my Servant David a Prince among them: I the Lord have spoken it. *Ezek. xxxvii. 24, 25.* And again, *David my Servant shall be King over them, and they shall have all one Shepherd.*—*David my Servant shall be their Prince for ever*. Now

since it is impossible that *David* should in these Passages be meant in Person, who had for some Ages been dead and buried before they were uttered, it remains that that Founder of the *Jewish Monarchy* is plainly set forth as the Type or Prefiguration of him, who should in After-ages raise it to the highest Glory.

As *David* now was by natural Extraction the immediate Son of *Jesse*, so *Christ*, who was both lineally descended from him, and eminently figured out, or represented by him, is likewise described under the same Character, as a *Rod* that should come forth out of the Stem of *Jesse*, and a *Branch* that should grow out of his Roots; which clearly points out his Pedigree in that Family, by a very natural and easy Metaphor. Let any one read over that eleventh Chapter of *Isaiab*, and he will easily perceive that that Character belongs to some future Prince, who should be greatly supported by Divine Power, to rescue his faithful People from the Oppression of their Enemies, and reign over them in Peace and Prosperity. And who should this be, but that same Deliverer, whom the Scriptures appear to have had constantly in View, as the Destroyer of the *Serpent* and his *Seed*, and the Redeemer of the Faithful among all Nations? And yet, because the Monarchy, erected in this Family of *Jesse*, was only meant for a Type or Prefiguration of his future Kingdom, therefore is he called again the *Root of Jesse*, as being the real Ground or Foundation of the Favours bestowed upon his Family, the ultimate End or Aim to which they were referred. The same Person is both the *Root of Jesse*, and a *Branch growing out of his Roots*: Which may explain to us that two-fold Character which he gives of himself in the Apocalypse, when, as it were, in the same Breath, he styles himself at once, *the Root and the Offspring of David*. The *Root*, because the Authority conferred upon the Family of *David* was derived from, and referred to the *Messiah*, as the Type to its intended Antitype; and the *Offspring*, because he was actually descended of that Royal Line, agreeably to the Tenor and Purport of the ancient Prophecies.

THE Difficulties that occur in the Pedigree of *Jesus*, related in the Gospel, so far as they affect the Reality of his Extraction from the Line of *David*, have been formerly considered. So that if the Predictions of the Kingdom in his Family were to be fulfilled in *Christ*, (and we shall see they are much more considerable, than can be imagined to be any other Way accomplished) then we have a clear Account of the Abolition of the temporal Kingdom, and a reasonable Inducement to attend to the Doctrine of the Gospel, which requires our Obedience to an heavenly King, who at present exercises a spiritual Discipline and Jurisdiction; and after the compleat Reduction of his Enemies, will receive his faithful Servants into endless Felicity.

WHEN the *Messiah* was thus pointed out to descend of the Family of *David*, and exercise a Jurisdiction in some sort successive and correspondent to his, it was wisely ordained in the Oeconomy of Providence, that the immediate Son and

and Successor of *David*, upon the Throne of *Israel*, should more eminently than the rest be made a lively Type and Prefiguration of *Messiah*. This was first of all notified upon King *David*'s Declaration of his Purpose to erect a Temple unto God, when the Piety of that Purpose was approved and commended, but yet the Execution of it was suspended till the Reign of his Son. *I will set up thy Seed after thee*, says God, *which shall proceed out of thy Bowels, and I will establish his Kingdom; he shall build a House for my Name, and I will establish the Throne of his Kingdom for ever; I will be his Father, and he shall be my Son: If he commit Iniquity, I will chasten him with the Rod of Men, and with the Stripes of the Children of Men.*

Berriman.
Sermon
IX.

1 Kings
viii. 18.

2 Sam.
vii. 12, &c.

As it is usual, in typical Descriptions, to insert some Characters which belong only to the Type, some which relate only to the Antitype, and others which are common to both, but in different Views and Acceptations; so it has been thought, by very good Interpreters, that this Prediction is to be divided between *Solomon* and *Christ*. The last Clause, which mentions the *Chastisement* of his *Iniquity*, has been thought to belong only to *Solomon*, and other temporal Successors on the Throne of *Judah*: Though, perhaps, even this may be applied to *Christ*, when we consider him, though sinless of himself, as standing, however, in the Place of Sinners, and bearing the *Chastisement* of their Iniquity.

THAT which concerns the eternal Duration of the Kingdom, could belong only to *Christ*, since the Regal Government ceased at the *Babylonish* Captivity, and was never after restored to the Family of *David*, but only in the Person of *Christ*. But the other Characters are common to both. To be a King in Peace and Prosperity, was not peculiar to *Solomon*; but such an Instance of Divine Favour towards him, as furnished a more lively Type of the prosperous Reign and Times of the *Messiah*. To build a material Temple, with great Splendor and Magnificence, was charged on the immediate Successor of *David*, who bequeathed him great Riches, and gave Instructions for that Purpose: But to erect a *Spiritual House*, consisting of living Stones, i. e. of faithful Men cemented into one Society, and built into an holy Temple in the Lord; this was typically foreshewn to be the Office of that Celestial King, who was to be the Glory and Blessedness of future Times. Both Kings agreed in this, that they had *David* to their Father; but one by Proximity of immediate Descent, and the other at the Distance of many Generations. And both also were the Sons of God; but *Christ* only by Nature, and *Solomon* by Grace. From whence the Author to the *Hebrews* made no Scruple to produce this Passage, as applicable, in the strictest manner, to *Christ*, and so as no Creature had a Claim to it. *For unto which of the Angels said he at any Time, Thou art my Son, this Day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?*

1 Pet. ii. 5.
Eph. ii. 21.

Heb. i. 5.

BUT here, the Adversaries of our Religion complain of gross Falsification, and accuse the sacred Writer of misapplying Scripture, when to prove *Christ*'s natural Sonship, and Superiority to all Creatures, he cites this Passage of the Old Testament, which has a plain and direct reference to King *Solomon*, who was only in an inferior Sense acknowledged for the Son of God. The typical Interpretation they reject, as arbitrary and precarious, and insist on the Occasion and Design of this Prediction, as confining it to *Solomon* alone. Now, though the Authority of the Apostle, attested and confirmed by Miracles, will be to all considering Men a sufficient Argument of the Truth of his Interpretation; yet it happens, in this Case, that there is much to be alledged in Behalf of it from the Old Testament itself. If the Text were consider'd singly as it stands in *Samuel*, perhaps it might be difficult to vindicate the Apostle's Citation against the Exception of an Infidel. But if we take it in Conjunction with the parallel Account of the same Fact in *Chronicles*, and compare it with other Predictions of the like Purport, in the Seventy-second and Eighty-ninth Psalms, and other Places of Scripture, which describe the Amplitude and Duration of this Kingdom of the Son of *David*, and of God, there will be Reason

Berriman.
Sermon
IX.

to conclude, that there is some higher Character than Solomon's drawn out, and that in divers of those Points where both Characters agree, the Sense in which they are applied to Solomon, is much below the Dignity and Force of the Expressions, which seem to require a sublimer Sense to answer and compleat them.

PARTICULARLY, as this Matter is stated in the Book of *Chronicles*, I conceive there are two Characters which could not be applied to the immediate Son of David, and the People of those Times, but must wait for their Accomplishment in some more illustrious Successor, and in a Kingdom which cannot be moved. One is the stable and secure Condition of the People: *Also I will ordain a Place for my People Israel, and will plant them, and they shall dwell in their Place, and shall be moved no more; neither shall the Children of Wickedness waste them any more.* Which agrees so well with those Descriptions, which the following Prophets give of the State of God's People in future Times, that it must be most unreasonable to confine it to the Days of Solomon, or the ancient Establishment of the Jewish Monarchy. For why should we not chuse to explain it consistently with other Prophecies, rather than limit it to such a Sense, as amounts at last to an Accusation of Falshood, in ascribing Stability and Perpetuity to that which has many Ages been destroy'd? The other Character, I meant, concerns the Person of *this Son of David*; of whom it is expressly promised, *I will settle him in my House, and in my Kingdom for ever*: No Succession of Princes to inherit the Kingdom after him, but the Son of David himself in Person, to enjoy an everlasting Monarchy. But to which of all the Sons of mortal Men, can this Promise be judged applicable? Does it not naturally lead us to acknowledge that singularly illustrious Person, who was also in a more eminent Sense the Son of God, whose Throne and Kingdom will be explained farther by the Co-incidence of other Prophecies?

1 Chron.
xvii. 9.

Vcr. 14.

MEAN while, it is not meant to be insisted, that the People of those Times could understand these Prophecies with all that Light and Advantage, which the following Scriptures have thrown upon them: But as the first Promise in Paradise contained the whole Doctrine of Redemption, though it needed the Addition of subsequent Revelations, to unfold and state it more explicitly; so these Predictions of the Kingdom in the House of David, did refer to the spiritual Advantages and Glory of the Messiah, though in such Terms as were not clear from all sort of Ambiguity, but left Matter of new Discovery to future Times. The low and sordid Genius of the People was best consulted by such a Dispensation: Nor was it fit for evil Spirits, professed Enemies of God, to be let far into the Mystery of Gospel Truths before the Time of their Accomplishment. Thus much, however, might quickly be concluded, that some future Son of David was designed in these Predictions; and that they could not have their full Completion in the Days of Solomon. The Sense of spiritual Joy and Consolation might arise in those, who addicted themselves to pious Exercise and Meditation; and the Influences of Divine Grace might direct their Thoughts to mystical and spiritual Advantages, for the exacter fulfilling of those Promises, which greatly exceeded the fading Satisfaction of this Life.

BUT after all, 'tis possible, they might look for more of temporal Prosperity than was really intended: They might expect that the outward Grandeur of a Court and Kingdom should never be taken from the Successors of David, but some Person of that Family should always sit upon the Throne of Israel, till one at last should rise to extend his Empire over the Heathen World, and raise it to the highest Prosperity. Some general Mention there had been of *visiting their Offences with the Rod, and their Sin with Scourges*: But this they might incline to understand of lighter Chastisements, rather than a Removal of the Kingly Government. So that if this Matter had not been further open'd, perhaps there had been few, whose Faith would have been strong enough to have supported them under those great Turns and Changes that were to happen in the Jewish State and Polity.

FOR this Reason, the Goodness of God became concern'd to foretel those Alterations ere they came, and renew his Assurance, notwithstanding, of a firm and inviolable *Covenant* with the *House of David*. Thus, when the Sin of *Solomon* was to be punished with the Revolt of ten Tribes from their Allegiance to his Family, yet still the Reservation of the Tribe of *Judah* was declared to have Regard to the Promise made unto *David*, of an *everlasting Kingdom* to be given to his *Seed*. Then again, 'tis likely the People might apprehend that this Kingdom, at least, should be continu'd throughout all Ages, till in the *latter Days* it should be rais'd to that Splendor and Glory which is described in many Places of the *Psalms*. But when that Kingdom had reach'd the utmost secular Glory for which it was designed, in the long and flourishing Reign of King *Uzziah*, as the Kingdom of *Israel*, about the same Time, was in its highest Prosperity under *Jeroboam* the Second; from that Time, both Kingdoms did apparently decline, till *Israel* was led captive to *Assyria*, and never more return'd to be a distinct Nation or People; and *Judah* also was led captive to *Babylon*, but restored to their Country by the Kings of *Persia*, though without a Restoration of the ancient Government in the Family of *David*.

Berriman.
Sermon
IX.

ABOUT this Time, therefore, the Spirit of Prophecy broke out in stronger Light than ever, to give timely Warning of these shocking Alterations, and fresh Assurance of the Coming of that *Son of David*, in whom alone the ancient Prophecies could justly be compleated. Great Care was taken to assure them, that they should not be utterly destroy'd in that Captivity, but that God, in due Time, would take Vengeance of their Enemies, and unite his People in one Kingdom, to enjoy perpetual Peace and Tranquillity.

IT has been often observ'd, that the Nation of the *Israelites* was figurative of the spiritual *Israel*, or Church of the *Messiah*. Accordingly, in these Predictions, the Restoration of that People, and the Vengeance on their Enemies, is so described, as to point out the State of the *Christian Church*, and the Perdition of those who should obstruct and oppose it. And for the better clearing up of this typical Exposition of some Prophecies, there are others, in which the abundant Accession of the *Gentiles* is most expressly, and literally foretold, and the utter Extirpation of Heathen Superstition and Idolatry. Which is but a farther Opening of the original Scheme of our Redemption, whereby the *Seed of the Woman* was to bruise the *Serpent's Head*, and all Nations were to be blessed in the *Seed of Abraham*. Withal, there are several Particulars foretold, relating to the Life and Actions of the *Messiah*; and at last, the exact Time of his appearing more nearly fixed and pointed out.

THIS State of Prophecy began, as was observed, in the Reign of King *Uzziah*, when *Amos*, *Isaiab*, and *Hosea*^a, began their Office, to give Notice of approaching Revolutions, and assure the *House of David*, notwithstanding, of the inviolable Certainty of the Divine Promises. The two last of these, with the Addition of *Micah the Morasthite* (to say nothing now of *Joel*, *Obadiab*, *Jonah*, and *Nabum*, who were in some part contemporary) continu'd to exercise their Office through the Reigns of *Jotham*, *Abaz*, and *Hezekiah*, in whose Time, the Kingdom of *Israel* was entirely subverted, and that of *Judah* reduced to the greatest Straits and Necessities.

AFTER this, there was little additional Light to the Doctrine of Redemption, till the Thirteenth of *Josiah*, (which was about seventy Years after the Death of *Hezekiah*) when *Jeremy* began to prophesy, and give nearer Notice of the *Babylonish Captivity*^c, under which, as well he, as *Daniel* and *Ezekiel*, delivered many illustrious Predictions of the Kingdom of *Messiah*, in order to support the Faithful under that astonishing Catastrophe, and instruct them

^a Mr. Bedford (*Scripture Chronology*, l. 6. c. 2. p. 645.) supposes *Hosea* to have been the first Prophet that left his Prophecy in Writing, and grounds it on *Hosea* i. 2. But see that otherwise cleared by *Pocock in loc.* As he prophesied in the Reign of *Jeroboam* the second, King of *Israel*, 'tis certain, he must begin by the Fifteenth of *Uzziah*, for then *Jeroboam* dy'd. (Compare 2 Kings xiv. 23. and xv. 1.) But the same may be said of *Amos*, whose Prophecy has this farther Character, That it was *two Years before the Earthquake*, *Amos* i. 1. And as he continu'd not to prophesy after the Reign of *Uzziah*, 'tis probable, he lived in the Beginning of it.

^c To him may be added, as join'd with him a little later, *Habakkuk*, and *Zephany*. See *Bedford's Scripture Chronology*, pag. 674.

Berriman.
Sermon
IX.

them still to look for the Completion of those Promises which had been made to the Family of *David*.

At their Return from this Captivity, the State of the People was less flourishing, and more dependent; the Monarchical Government was not restored, nor the Temple built in such Magnificence and Splendor as before. Then new Assurances were given, suited to that State of their Affairs, by the Prophets *Haggai*, *Zechary*, and *Malachi*. The Lord himself was to honour that Temple with his Presence, and make up for that Defect of *Glory* which had given them Uneasiness. And a *Messenger* there was designed to *prepare the Way before him*, and inculcate those Doctrines, which might qualify the Minds of Men for his Reception.

This closed the Predictions of the Old Testament; and the whole opens such a Scene of Prophecy, that to treat of each Particular singly by itself, would be a Matter of greater Length and Compass, than suits with my Design, or would fall within the Time proper for pursuing it. It may suffice, to reduce them to such general Heads, as will comprise the principal Points, and shew the State of Prophecy in these Periods, leaving the more minute Consideration and Pursuit of them, as Matter of farther Discussion and Enquiry.

Now, with respect to the Regal Character of the *Messiah*, which is the View wherein he is most usually consider'd before and under the *Babylonish* Captivity, from the Time the Kingdom had been fixed in the Family of *David*, there are chiefly three Circumstances to be noted in those Descriptions which are given of it by the ancient Prophets; namely, First, the Amplitude and Extent of this Kingdom: Secondly, Its Peace and Tranquillity: And, Thirdly, Its Duration. The Placing of which Circumstances in a proper Light, and stating that Evidence they give to the Doctrine of the Gospel, shall (God willing) be the Business of some following Discourses.

Now to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be all Honour, &c.

SERMON

SERMON X.

The Amplitude and Extent of the Kingdom of *Christ*.

Preached, *February* the 1st, 1730-31.

The Second SERMON on this TEXT.

LUKE i. 32, 33.

And the Lord God shall give unto him the Throne of his Father David. And he shall reign over the House of Jacob for ever; and of his Kingdom there shall be no End.

IT was the Business of our last Discourse, to shew that the Jewish Monarchy established in the House of *David*, was design'd to figure out the Kingdom of the *Messiah*, who was to spring out of the same Family; and those magnificent Descriptions, which may seem to belong to *David*, or *Solomon*, will, upon a nearer View, be more justly referred to *Christ*, as the Person ultimately, and in some Cases, singly intended. They appear to describe such a State of Affairs, as did not occur in those early Times; and therefore remained to be expected in Times to come. Accordingly, it appears, that after the Death of *David* and *Solomon*, the like Descriptions are given by the Prophets, of another King to arise in future Times: Which shews, that the former Descriptions belong'd not personally to them, but to this Successor, who still continu'd to be the Subject of their Prophecies.

Berriman.
Sermon
X.

BUT lest the People should expect an uninterrupted Continuance of the *Davidical Monarchy*, till it should be raised to that Heighth of Splendor and Glory, the Spirit of Prophecy was poured out in great Abundance, to give them Warning of approaching Revolutions, and at the same Time, to confirm and explain the ancient Promises of *sure Mercies* and Blessing, and an everlasting Kingdom in the House of *David*. So that the Angel spoke no unusual Language, in his Salutation of the Blessed Virgin, when he assured her, that *the Lord God should give unto her Son the Throne of his Father David, and he should reign over the House of Jacob for ever, and of his Kingdom there should be no End.*

BUT because the Prophecies relating to this Kingdom of the *Messiah*, are too numerous, to be singly and particularly consider'd, I propos'd to treat of them under such general Heads, as may comprise the principal Marks or Characters of this glorious Dispensation, and give us the most comprehensive Idea and View of it. Now, there are three Characters by which its Glory

670 The Amplitude and Extent of the Kingdom of *Christ*.

Berriman. and Excellence is most usually set forth and described, namely, First, the
Sermon Amplitude and Extent of this Kingdom: Secondly, Its Peace and Tran-
X. quillity: And, Thirdly, Its Duration. By treating of which Points, I shall
 at once explain the Angel's Prediction in the Text, and the most usual Topicks
 of the ancient Prophets, when they assured the *Kingdom* to the *House* of
David.

I BEGIN with the Amplitude and Extent of this Kingdom, which the
 Angel expresses in the Text, by the *Throne of David*, and his *reigning over the*
House of Jacob. If this be restrained to those Dominions of which King
David was actually possess'd, and that Country which was given by Promise
 to the lineal Descendants of the Stock of *Jacob*, this Prediction will fall
 short of the Descriptions which had anciently been given of the future En-
 largement and flourishing Condition of the Empire established in that Family.
 But if we take it with a View to that Exposition which has been often
 mentioned, whereby the *Seed of Israel*, according to the Flesh, was made to
 figure out a *spiritual Seed* gather'd out of *all Nations*, and the external
 Monarchy of *David*, and his Successors, to be a Pledge of that more enlarg'd
 Authority, which the greatest of his Sons should exercise for the Protection of
 his faithful Servants incorporated into one Society, and for the Confusion and
 Overthrow of all his Enemies: Then the Words of the Angel will be found
 at once to correspond with the general Expectations of the People at that
 Time, and with the Predictions of the ancient Prophets concerning the Pro-
 sperity and Extent of the *Jewish* Monarchy in future Ages.

LOOK but into the Book of *Psalms*, and you will find this Kingdom describ-
 ed in such a pompous manner, as answers not to any Time of *David* or
Solomon, but waited for a future Accomplishment; that it should reach even
Pfal. lxxii. from Sea to Sea, and from the River unto the Ends of the Earth; which seems
 8. to express the most boundless and unlimited Empire over the whole habitable
Pfal. lxxii. World: That *all Kings* should fall down before him, *all Nations* should do him
 11. Service, and present their Tribute to him as their Sovereign. *The Kings of Tar-*
shish and of the Isles, which intends these Western Parts of the World, *shall*
Pfal. lxxii. *bring Presents; the Kings of Sheba and Saba shall offer Gifts*. How was this
 10. fulfilled in the Reign of *David* or *Solomon*? Can any Man pretend that the
 Arms of the one, or the Wisdom of the other, did extend the *Jewish* Empire,
 to answer such Descriptions? What then, if the Birth and Reign of *Solomon*
 were the immediate Occasion of penning that *Psalms* in which they occur? It
 is easy to imagine, that the holy Penman's Thoughts might, in a Rapture,
 be transferred from the immediate Subject, to one more remote, of which that
 was only a faint Emblem and Representation? And from hence the Character
 is drawn in so sublime a Strain, as could not literally be applied to *Solomon*,
 but must belong to some other Person, far superior to him in the Extent of his
 Authority, whose Dominion was not to be confined to *Canaan*, or a few neigh-
 bouring Territories, but who was to have the *Heathen* given him for his Inhe-
Pfal. ii. 8. *ritance, and the uttermost Parts of the Earth* for his Possession.

AND because it could not be imagin'd that this Empire should be so
 extended without some Struggle or Opposition, 'tis added, That the King,
 in whose Days it was to happen, should be signally victorious, and triumph
Pfal. lxxii. over his Opposers, that *his Enemies* should even lick the Dust; in Allusion
 9. to the ancient Curse of that old Serpent and his Seed, whose Head was to be
 bruised by that same Seed of the Woman, that Seed of *Abraham* and *David*,
 whose Conquests are described by his judging among the Heathen, and filling
Pfal. cx.6. the Places with the dead Bodies, and wounding the Heads over many Countries.
 And lest we should understand this to denote nothing more than temporal
 Success and Authority, we are instructed farther, that besides the Destruction
 of those who are too proud to submit, his Victories should terminate in the
 Reduction of the rest to the Faith and Worship of the true God, that his
Pfal. lxxvii. Ways may be known upon Earth, and his saving Health among all Nations; that all
 2. Nations

Nations whom he had made might come and Worship before the Lord, and glorify his Name. Berr. man. Sermon X.

THE Conversion of the Heathen, which is thus far intimated in the Book of *Psalms*, is more clearly foretold by the succeeding Prophets, and particularly by *Isaiah*, to be effected under the auspicious Reign and Influence of that *Son of David* they were taught to expect. And what they then look'd for as future, in the Declension of the *Jewish* Polity, could not be any Thing that had happened long before in the Reign of *David*, or of *Solomon*. Besides that their Descriptions do import the Conversion of *whole Nations*, and *all Nations*, to the true Religion; and consequently could not be compleated in the Profelyting only of a few particular Persons, but must intend a general Reduction of *all People* to the same Obedience. Behold my Servant whom I uphold, mine Elect in whom my Soul delighteth: I have put my Spirit in him, he shall bring forth Judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set Judgment in the Earth, and the Isles (by which Phrase is particularly meant the Western Parts of the World) shall wait for his Law. So again, I will give thee for a Covenant of the People, for a Light of the Gentiles, to open the blind Eyes, to bring out the Prisoners from the Prison, and them that sit in Darkness out of the Prison House. It is a light Thing that thou shouldst be my Servant, to raise up the Tribes of Jacob, and to restore the Preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a Light to the Gentiles, that thou mayst be my Salvation unto the End of the Earth. — Behold, I will lift up mine Hand to the Gentiles, and set up my Standard to the People; and they shall bring thy Sons in their Arms, and thy Daughters shall be carried upon their Shoulders; and Kings shall be thy Nursing Fathers, and their Queens thy Nursing Mothers. Psal. lxxxvi. 9.
Isaiah xlii.
Isaiah xlii. 1.
Isaiah xlii. 4.
Isaiah xlii. 6, 7.
Isaiah xlix. 6.
Isaiah xlix. 22, 23.

THAT the Person, who should effect so great an Alteration in the State of the World, was the same glorious King that had been promised of the House of *David*, is assuredly collected from that Unity of Character which appears in other Passages of the same Prophet. In that Day (says he) there shall be a Root of Jesse, which shall stand for an Ensign of the People, to it shall the Gentiles seek, and his Rest shall be glorious. And again, I will make an everlasting Covenant with you, even the sure Mercies of David. Behold, I have given him for a Witness to the People, a Leader and Commander to the People. Behold, thou shalt call a Nation that thou knowest not, and Nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee. The Consequence hereof is declared to be an universal Acknowledgment and Reception of the true Religion, that the Earth should be full of the Knowledge of the Lord, as the Waters cover the Sea; inasmuch that from the rising of the Sun, even unto the going down of the same, his Name should be great among the Gentiles, and in every Place [therefore not, as formerly, at Jerusalem alone] Incense should be offered unto his Name, and a pure Offering; for my Name shall be great among the Heathen, saith the Lord of Hosts. Isaiah xi. 10.
Isaiah lv. 3, &c.
Isaiah xi. 9.
Mal. i. 11.

YET still as the true Religion had long been professed only by the Jews, and when thus explained to greater Perfection, should from them be propagated through the Earth: For this Reason the Conversion of the Gentiles is very deservedly reputed an Accession to the Jews, and an Engraftment upon their Stock. It was the ancient Rule concerning any private Person who became a Profelyte to Judaism, that he should be as one born among them, entitled to equal Privileges with themselves; and correspondently to this, the Profelyting of whole Nations was to be deemed an Increase and Addition to their own. Levit. xix. 34.

IT is a very remarkable Prediction to this Purpose which occurs in two contemporary Prophets, *Micah* and *Isaiah*. It shall come to pass in the last Days, that the Mountain of the Lord's House shall be established in the Top of the Mountains, and shall be exalted above the Hills, and all Nations shall flow unto it. And many People shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the Mountain of the Lord, to the House of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his Ways, and

672 The Amplitude and Extent of the Kingdom of Christ.

Berriman. and we will walk in his Paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the
Sermon Word of the Lord from Jerusalem; And he shall judge among the Nations, &c.
X.

Isaiah ii. And so in the Sixtieth of Isaiah, after a Description of that gross Darkneſs
2, &c. which covered other Nations, and a Promise of that Light and Glory which
Micah iv. should rise upon Israel, it is added,—And the Gentiles shall come to thy Light,
1, &c. and Kings to the Brightneſs of thy Riſing. Lift up thine Eyes round about and

ſee, all theſe gather themſelves together, they come to thee, thy Sons ſhall come from
far, and thy Daughters ſhall be nurſed at thy Side. Then thou ſhalt ſee, and
flow together, and thine Heart ſhall fear, and be enlarged, becauſe the Abun-
dance of the Sea ſhall be converted unto thee, the Forces [or Wealth] of the Gen-
tiles, ſhall come unto thee. By the Abundance of the Sea, ſeems to be meant the
Riches of that Part of the World to which the Jews travelled by Sea, and par-
ticularly theſe Weſtern Parts, inhabited by the Sons of Japheth, and deſcribed
farther at the ninth Verſe, under the Character of the Iſles waiting for God, and
the Ships of Tarſhiſh bringing Sons from far, their Silver and their Gold with
them, unto the Name of the Lord, and to the Holy One of Iſrael. But the other
Phraſe of the Wealth of the Gentiles extends to other Countries, and is after-
wards explained by Flocks of Kedar and Nebaioth offered with Acceptance, the
Camels and Dromedaries of Midian and Ephah, with all them from Sheba,
bringing Gold and Incenſe, and ſhewing forth the Praises of the Lord. For this
Reason the Gentiles and their Kings are reckoned to be brought to Jeruſalem,
and a ſevere Denunciation is annexed—For the Nation and Kingdom that

Isaiah lx.
67.

Isaiah lx.
11, 12.

will not ſerve thee ſhall periſh: Yea thoſe Nations ſhall be utterly waſted.
LET any one compare theſe Deſcriptions with what was alledged before
out of the Seventy ſecond Pſalm, and he will find ſuch Unity of Character, that
he cannot but conclude they muſt refer to the ſame Time and State of Things;
and how then ſhould that have had its full Completion in the Reign of Solomon,
which is ſtill ſpoken of as future in the Days of Iſaiah?

THE Gentiles being thus gathered to Iſrael, and incorporated with it, we
ſee a plain Reason why they are included in the Name of Iſrael, and the De-
ſcriptions which run in the Style and Title of the Jewiſh Church, are applicable
to the Chriſtian: Though at the ſame Time it is acknowledged, that the great-
eſt Part of the Jewiſh Nation ſhould fall themſelves by a deplorable Apoſtaſy,
whiſt their Deſection ſhould be abundantly ſupplied by this Acceſſion of the
Gentiles. 'Tis thus the Prophet complains, Though the Children of Iſrael be

Isaiah x.
20, &c.

as the Sand of the Sea, yet a Remnant only ſhould return, and ſtay upon the Lord,
the Holy One of Iſrael, in Truth. To the ſame Purpoſe he repreſents the
Church as lamenting the Loſs of her Children, and wondering at a new and
numerous Offſpring ſettled in their Room. The Children which thou ſhalt
have (ſays he) after thou haſt loſt the other, ſhall ſay again in thine Ears, the
Place is too ſtrait for me: Give place to me that I may dwell. Then ſhalt
thou ſay in thine Heart, who hath begotten me theſe, ſeeing I have loſt my Chil-
dren, and am deſolate, a Captive, and removing to and fro? And who hath brought
up theſe? Behold, I was left alone; theſe, where had they been? Thus ſaith the
Lord God, Behold, I will lift up mine Hand to the Gentiles, and ſet up my Stand-
ard to the People, and they ſhall bring thy Sons in their Arms, &c.

Isaiah xlix.
20, &c.

WHILST thus the Gentile World, as grafted into the Church, and proſe-
lyted to the true Religion, are comprehended and included in the Name of
Iſrael, it muſt be reaſonable to imagine that the Character of thoſe who
ſhould continue to reject and oppoſe it, is couched under the Character of the
Enemies of Iſrael; and ſo what might in ſome reſpects have a literal Relation
to the State and Circumſtances of the Nations round them, will be found to
have a typical, but more important View, to the Heathen World in general,
upon this ſpreading of the Goſpel Light, denoting at once the utter Over-
throw of ſuch as cannot be reclaimed, and the happy Conversion of the reſt,
and their Conjunction with the true Iſrael.

IN the ſame Place where it is ſaid, That this Root of Jeſſe ſhould ſtand for
an Enſign of the People: They ſhall ſly (it is added by the Prophet) upon the
Shoulders

The Amplitude and Extent of the Kingdom of *Christ*. 673

Shoulders of the Philistines towards the West; they shall spoil them of the East together: They shall lay their Hand upon Edom and Moab, and the Children of Ammon shall obey them. We have the same Thing foretold under the Name of Babylon. For the Lord (says the Prophet) will have Mercy upon Jacob, and will yet chuse Israel, and set them in their own Land; and the Strangers shall be joined with them, and they shall cleave to the House of Jacob. And the People shall take them, and bring them to their Place: and the House of Israel shall possess them in the Land of the Lord, for Servants and Handmaids, and they shall take them Captive whose Captives they were, and they shall rule over their Oppressors. This may serve as a Key for opening many other Passages, where the Judgments denounced against Egypt, Nineveh, or Babylon, will be aptly understood of the Continuation of that ancient Enmity which was put between the Seed of the Woman, and the Seed of the Serpent, and an Assurance of that final Victory which was foretold from the Beginning.

BUT more especially what is foretold of the Destruction of Idolatry, and the utter Overthrow of Heathen Superstition, deserves to be considered upon this Occasion, as being plainly applicable to no other than the Gospel Times. 'Tis thus the Prophet *Isaiah* describes the Lord as riding on a swift Cloud, so that the Idols of Egypt should be moved; till at last, after great Desolations and Confusion, the Egyptians themselves should learn to know the Lord, and serve with the Assyrians; whilst Israel should be the third with them, even a Blessing in the Midst of the Land, whom the Lord of Hosts should bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my People, and Assyria the Work of my Hand, and Israel mine Inheritance. Nor is this declared only of the Idols of Egypt, but in general of all Nations—The Gods that have not made the Heavens and the Earth, even they shall perish from the Earth, and from under these Heavens.—And the Lord will be terrible unto them; for he will famish all the Gods of the Earth, and Men shall Worship him, every one from his Place, even all the Isles of the Heathen.—And it shall come to pass in that Day, saith the Lord of Hosts, that I will cut off the Names of the Idols out of the Land, and I will also cause the Prophets and the unclean Spirit to pass out of the Land.

WHEN the whole Gentile World is thus reduced to the Obedience of Faith, and, as it were, incorporated with the House of Israel, then the main Body of Israel (which till then shall have persisted in their Infidelity) will join with this Society of faithful Men in acknowledging their Prince and Saviour; And the Lord shall set his Hand again the second Time, to recover the Remnant of his People which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and Hamath, and from the Islands of the Sea. And he shall set up an Ensign for the Nations, and shall assemble the Outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four Corners of the Earth. How well does this and other Descriptions suit with our blessed Saviour's Prediction, That Jerusalem should be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the Times of the Gentiles be fulfilled? and with St. Paul's Account, That Blindness in part is happened unto Israel, until the Fulness of the Gentiles be come in, and so all Israel shall be saved?

UPON this general Coalition of the Jews and Gentiles, the Remembrance of ancient Factions and Animosities shall cease; and however the House of Israel had formerly separated into two Parties, and the Tribe of Ephraim had set up a rival Successor against the Family of David, yet in this future Restauration, the Envy of Ephraim shall depart; and God will make them one Nation in the Land upon the Mountains of Israel, and one King (namely David, or the Son of David) shall be King to them all; and they shall be no more two Nations, neither shall they be two Kingdoms any more at all. The Gentiles also, as incorporated with them, shall be subject to the same King. And it shall be in that Day, that living Waters shall go out from Jerusalem, half of them towards the former Sea, and half of them towards the hinder Sea, so as to encompass the whole World: inasmuch that all Men being instructed in the Faith and Worship of the true God, and all false Worship being utterly abolished, the

674 The Amplitude and Extent of the Kingdom of *Christ*.

*Berriman. Sermon X. Lord shall be King over all the Earth, JEHOVAH shall be one, and his Name one**, without Rival or Competitor.

** Zech. xiv. 9. THIS Kingdom is denoted, in the Prophecy of Daniel, by the Stone cut out without Hands, which put a Period to all other Kingdoms, but became it self a great Mountain, and filled the whole Earth; which is expressed in still clearer Terms in another Part of the same Prophecy. I saw in the Night Visions; and behold, one like the Son of Man came with the Clouds of Heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days, and came near before him, and there was given him Dominion and Glory, and a Kingdom, that all People, Nations, and Languages should serve him: his Dominion is an everlasting Dominion, which shall not pass away and his Kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. The Unity of Character in these and many other Prophecies, is such as does oblige us to refer them to the same Period.*

Dan. vii. 13, 14.

IT is impossible to apply these Prophecies to any Events at the Time when they were uttered, or during the ancient Republick of the *Jews*. But if they be applied to the Days of the *Messiah*, they will then be found to fall in with the whole Scheme of Scripture Prophecy, and make up one uniform and harmonious Expectation. I know it is alledged by the Patrons of Infidelity, that they are not concerned to assign a consistent Sense of ancient Prophecies. They insist, that our Exposition of them can never be maintained; and if there is no other to be given, it is no Fault of theirs; they are content they should remain without any determinate Meaning or View at all. But however profane and ludicrous Men may please to jest, and divert themselves with serious Things, it is a Consideration that always must have weight with Men of sober and sedate Minds, to observe here is a long Series and Chain of Prophecy, explained in a harmonious and consistent Method, and at last centering in a Person whose Doctrine is otherwise supported by undoubted Miracles, and every kind of Attestation that is proper to gain Credit and Esteem to it. It cannot but appear much more reasonable, to admit of this Exposition, than either to leave those Prophecies without any determinate Meaning at all, or else to close in with the low and flat Interpretations of some great Men, (whom I should be loth to suspect of any real Design to serve the Cause of Infidelity) who have run through the *Jewish* History, to pick up such Events as might seem to answer some or other of these Descriptions, without any constant or uniform View preserved throughout the Whole: As if they envied the ancient Church any sort of Knowledge of the Doctrine of Redemption, and meant entirely to confine its Hopes to mean and earthly Satisfaction.

BUT admitting our Exposition of the Prophecies; it may be asked by *Jews* and Infidels, how were they in that Sense applicable to *Jesus* of *Nazareth*, or fulfilled in the Event by the Enlargement of his Kingdom and Authority? Can it be pretended that *all Nations*, have submitted themselves to his Religion; that those who could not be convinced, have been destroyed and consumed; and the rest baptized into the Profession of his Faith? Are there not still many Nations remaining in their *Pagan* Ignorance? Have not some *Christian* Countries been over-run with the Imposture of *Mahomet*? Nay, and has not Idolatry it self been introduced into the *Christian* Church? And why then should we contend to explain the Prophecies in such a Sense, as would deny them any proper Completion?

IN answer to all this, it deserves to be considered, that there is great Variety of Facts foretold to be accomplished in the Days of the *Messiah*. There is a Time of Struggle and Opposition, as well as Victory and Triumph. And as 'tis reasonable to allow some Course of Time for the effecting of so great an Alteration; so neither was it necessary that the Scene should alter in all Places at once, and every Nation in the same Age submit to the Obedience of Faith. Not but that God could, if he had pleased, have performed his Purpose with a quicker Dispatch! But it is not for us to prescribe Bounds to his Divine Wisdom, when he has not been pleased to prescribe them himself, or

III. 10 V at

The Amplitude and Extent of the Kingdom of *Christ*. 675

at least not to notify them to us. We do not then contend that every Thing which was foretold of the *Messiah's* Kingdom is already accomplished: But we are bold to say, there is no Necessity it should, it being enough to vindicate the Divine Veracity, and support the *Christian Cause*, if it be all accomplished in its due Time. Mean while, we have the Satisfaction to observe, that the spreading of our Religion through so many Nations, and by Methods so unlikely and contrary to human Policy, has already answered in great Measure to the ancient Predictions, and is therefore become a very weighty and important Confirmation of that which still remains to be accomplished.

Berriman.
Sermon
X.

IN particular, the Destruction of the *Heathen Idolatry*, and its flying (as it were) before the Face of *Christianity*, appeared at first in the gradual Declension, and at length in the utter Silence of its *Oracles*^a, a Fact too notorious to be overlooked either by *Heathen* or *Christian Writers*; but which the former were extremely puzzled to account for^b, whilst they were willing to impute it to the Death, or wearing-out of their *Genii* or *Demons*, whom they thought to preside more immediately in *Oracles*; or else to some Defect of *Vapour* and *Exhalation*, or to some certain Motion and Position of the *Stars*, which (as *Porphyrus*^c reports the *Delphick Oracle* it self not to have dissembled) hindered their *Demons* from the Knowledge of Futurity, and disabled them for discerning Truth from Falshood; Reasons trifling and impertinent to be alledged, but at the same Time implying a Confession of the Vanity and Folly of worshipping such puny Deities.

THE *Christians*, the mean while, looked upon it as a certain Argument of the Commencement of that Kingdom, which is spoke of by the ancient Prophets; and though the Devil, as a *strong Man armed*, had long kept Possession of the *Gentile World*, yet now *Christ*, as a *stronger than he*, was come upon him, to spoil and dispossess him, and take from him all his Armour wherein he trusted; that spoiling Principalities and Powers, (as the Apostle speaks) he might make a shew of them openly, triumphing over them. From hence their *Oracles* by degrees grew more rare and less explicit; and as they were forced to bear some honourable Testimony to our Saviour's Character, and also to the God of the *Jews*^d, so the Powers of Enthusiasm were manifestly feebler and fainter than before; insomuch that *Porphyrus*^e himself, in the third Century, confesses, that from the Time that *Jesus* began to be worshipped, they had received no Help or Favour from the Gods: An important Confession from an Adversary, of their Impotence, and his Divinity!

Luke xi.
22.
Col. ii. 15.

THE same is in effect attested by what History relates of *Julian* the Apostate, who, applying to the *Oracle* at *Daphne*^f, before his *Persian Expedition*, could obtain no other Answer but this, after a long Silence, that *the Demon was hindered, by the Dead that lay in that Neighbourhood*, from uttering his *Oracles*. The Emperor easily suspected it was the Body of *St. Babylas*, the *Christian Martyr*, and once Bishop of *Antioch*, that was the Occasion of *Apollo's Silence*^g: Whereupon he gave orders to the *Christians*^h, to remove it;

^a Vid. *Clasen de Orac. Gentil.* L. I. c. 26.

^b Vid. *Plutarch. de Oraculor. defectu.* item *Anton. vener. de Oraculis & divinat. Antiquor.* cap. 9. in Vol. 7. *Theaur. Græc. Antiq. per Gron.* See also *Dr. Jenkin's Reasonableness of Christian Religion*, Vol. I. par. 3. chap. 3.

^c Εἴπε γὰρ ὁ Απόλλων πρὸς τοὺς ἱερεῖς τῆς καλαμάρας, ὡς ἰδεῖσθαι, ποιητὴς τῆς περὶ αὐτοῦ, Κλεισθίου; καὶ τὸν λόγον. Ψευδολογία λέγει. *Porphyr. apud Euseb. Præp. Evang.* lib. 6. cap. 5. alias 4.

^d *Porphyr. apud Euseb. Demonstr. Evang.* lib. 3. cap. 6. pag. 134. item *Præp. Evang.* lib. 9. cap. 10. pag. 413. Edit. Petav. & apud *D. August. de Civ. Dei*, lib. 19. cap. 23.

^e Ἰουλιανὸς γὰρ τιμωμένῳ, ἐδιδόκει τὸς θείῳ δημοσίᾳ ἀρετίᾳ εἶναι. *Porphyr. apud Euseb. Præp. Evang.* lib. 5. cap. 1.

^f *Sozom. Hist.* lib. 5. cap. 19, 20.

^g It seems, the Heathens pretended to impute it to the Pollution of the Place, from the Interment of dead Bodies in general. But it is acutely observed by *St. Chrysostom*, that this must be a meer Pretence, since *Julian* ordered only the moving of *St. Babylas's* Bones, and suffered all others to rest where they were. τῶς γὰρ ἄλλαις πάντας ἱερῆς ἀρετῆς, ἀκρίτοι τὸν μέγιστον μόνον εἶναι. *D. Chrysost. panegy. in S. Babyl. Orat.* 1. Tom. 5. pag. 440. Ed. Savil.

^h *Mr. Mede* (in his *Apostasy of the latter Times*, par. 2. chap. 3. pag. 680.) suspects some Delusion in this Matter, and places here the Beginning of the Veneration of Relicks. If there was any Delusion, it must be *Satan's* own; the *Christians* could not invent it, the *Heathens* would not; and whatever was the Devil's Design, the Fact it self is too well attested to admit of any Dispute.

676 The Amplitude and Extent of the Kingdom of *Christ*.

Berriman
Sermon
X.

it; after which, though that and other *Oracles* spake upon some Occasions, yet the Falshood and Delusion of them loudly proclaimed their Shame¹; and it was not long before the Temple of *Apollo* was destroyed by Fire from Heaven, and so the *Oracle* struck dumb for ever.

THIS Story is not only related by St. *Chrysostom*, (who lived upon the Spot, and at the Time of Action) by *Sozomen*, and other *Christian* Writers not long afterwards, but it is in good measure acknowledged by *Libanius* the Sophist^k, and by *Julian*^l himself, who was upon the Matter pretty much perplexed to account for this Dumbness and Cessation of the *Heathen* *Oracles*. He only hoped to retort the Difficulty on the *Christians*, by objecting that the Gift of *Prophecy* was also ceased in the Church; so that they had no more *Oracles* to boast of than the *Heathen* World. To this St. *Cyril* justly answered^m, that since *Christ* had appeared to be the End of the Law and the Prophets, and was sufficiently made known unto Men, not only by his settling a Canon of Divine Revelation, but by sending the Holy Ghost into our Hearts, it cannot be alledged that the Spirit has deserted us, but rather that we are translated into new and more abundant Grace.

So did the Spirit of Darkeness fly before the Gospel Light; and if, in some remote Countries where the Gospel has not yet reached, he still retains his Empire, and utters a less pompous kind of *Oracles*; yet we have it related by credible Authorityⁿ, that, upon the coming of *Christians* into these Parts, a visible Restraint is laid upon his Power; and the evil Spirits have been forced to confess, that such Restraint was owing to their Vicinity. Which confirms our Expectation, that the *Morning* shall sometime dawn with them, and the Conversion of the *Nations* shall be made compleat. But if this old Deceiver, whilst his Dominion is weakened in the *Heathen* World, has notwithstanding, under different Disguises, insinuated himself into the *Christian* Church, and led many Captive to a new kind of Idolatry and Superstition; as this is nothing more than the ancient Scriptures had taught us to expect, so the same Scriptures give Ground to hope for its Removal in due Time, when the Church shall be freed from all Division and Perplexity, and enjoy an everlasting Peace, above the Reach and Opposition of its Enemies. But the fuller stating of this Point, will yield us Matter for another Discourse.

¹ *Philostorg. Excerpt. Hist. lib. 7. cap. 12.*

^k *Liban. Monod. super Apoll. fanum igni exult. pag. 185. cited by Dr. Cave, in his Life of St. Babylas.*

^l *Misopog. pag. 361. Edit. Spanhem. Julian* there charges the Burning of *Apollo's* Temple on the *Christians*, and accordingly revenged it on them, (See *Zonar. Annal. lib. 13. cap. 12.*) but thinks the God had forsaken the Temple before the Burning. *ἰμοὶ μὴ εἴδωκα, καὶ περὶ τοῦ πυρὸς ἀπολαοποιεῖται τοῦτον ὁ Θεός.*

^m *Cyril. Alex. lib. 6. contra Julian. pag. 198, 9.* ⁿ See *Waser's Voyages*, page 38, 39.

SERMON

SERMON XI.

The Peace and Tranquillity of *Christ's* Kingdom.

Preached, *March* the 1st, 1730-31.

The Third SERMON on this TEXT.

LUKE i. 32, 33.

And the Lord God shall give unto him the Throne of his Father David. And he shall reign over the House of Jacob for ever; and of his Kingdom there shall be no End.

AFTER having shewn that the Spiritual Kingdom of the *Messiah* was typified and represented by the Temporal Kingdom in the House of *David*, I proceeded to lay down these three principal Notes or Characters of the *Messiah's* Kingdom, that so the Prophecies concerning it might be reduced to these general Heads, in order to represent them with the better Distinction, and save the Length of enquiring into every one apart: Namely, First, the Amplitude and Extent of it: Secondly, its Peace and Tranquillity: And, Thirdly, its Duration.

THE Amplitude and Extent of the *Messiah's* Kingdom was shewn to exceed, beyond Comparison, whatever had been seen in the Days of *David*, or of *Solomon*, or the most Flourishing of any of their Successors; that it was to extend over the whole habitable World, and incorporate *all Nations* into one Society; that after an entire Conquest and Overthrow of all Opposers, in the Destruction of *Heathen* Idols, and every false Religion, with their obstinate Adherents, the Multitude of Converts should be received as the *Israel of God*, and submit to the Empire of this *Son of David*; so that henceforth there should be but *one Kingdom*, and one Way of Worship, over all the Earth. This began to be fulfilled, when our Lord commissioned his Apostles to preach the Gospel among all Nations, beginning at *Jerusalem*; whose Preaching was accompanied with mighty Success in the Conversion of great Multitudes, and the gradual Declension of *Heathen* Superstition and Idolatry, till the civil Powers at length owned themselves Converts to the Name of *Jesus*, and encouraged the Profession of that Faith, which at first they had laboured to destroy. So great a Progress, by Methods so unlikely and contrary to human Policy, may be taken for an Earnest of such future Increase as will come up to the Descriptions of the ancient Prophets, till all the Kingdoms of the World do become the Kingdoms of our Lord, and of his *Christ*, and the whole Earth be full of the Knowledge of the Lord as the Waters cover the Sea.

Berriman.
Sermon
XI.

Luke
xxiv. 47.

Rev. xi.
15.
Isai. xi. 9.

Berriman.
Sermon
XI.

IN stating this Amplitude and Extent of the *Messiah's* Kingdom, I have of course anticipated a Part of what might be observed under the next Point to be considered; namely, its Peace and Tranquillity. For when all Enemies and Opposers are destroyed, and the whole World is agreed in acknowledging one only Lord and Sovereign, and in paying him a chearful and uniform Obedience; can we imagine a more prosperous Government than this, a State of more perfect quiet, and undisturbed Repose? But the Prophets have not left us to collect this only by Inference and rational Deduction; they have in the most exprefs Terms assured us, that the *Blessing of Peace* shall be given unto the People and Subjects of this glorious Son and Successor of *David*: *I will extend Peace to Jerusalem like a River; I will also make thine Officers Peace, and thine Exaētors Righteousness; and in this Place will I give Peace, saith the Lord of Hosts. Ye shall go out with Joy, and be led forth with Peace. And great shall be the Peace of thy Children. The Work of Righteousness shall be Peace, and my People shall dwell in a peaceable Habitation, and in sure Dwellings, and in quiet Resting-places.* From hence this Son, born of the House of *David*, is represented as the *Prince of Peace*; and the Ministers he thinks fit to employ, as the Ambassadors and *Publishers of Peace*. Whatever Jealousies and Emulations had formerly divided his peculiar People, so as that ten Tribes did agree to set up a rival Prince against the House of *David*, yet now it is foretold that this *Envy of Ephraim shall depart*, so that *Ephraim shall not envy Judah, nor Judah any more vex Ephraim*, but both shall unite in one Government and one Worship, and agree with one Heart to *seek the Lord their God, and David their King*. And as they should have nothing to fear from intestine Divisions of their own, so neither from other Nations, nor the Nations themselves from one another; but being all incorporated into one Body, they should have one only Interest to promote in obeying that *Law* which should *go forth out of Zion*, and that *Word of the Lord* which should *issue from Jerusalem*. Then might they be at Liberty to *beat their very Swords into Plough-Shares, and their Spears into pruning Hooks*; when Nation should have no farther Occasion to *lift up Sword against Nation*, neither should they learn *War any more*; but might sit every Man in quiet under his own *Vine and Fig-Tree*, and none should make them afraid. Their former Aversions and Antipathies shall cease; and they who had used to be most fierce and ravenous, shall yield to the gentle Discipline of *Christ*, and put on the humble Spirit of his Followers; *The Wolf also shall dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard shall lie down with the Kid, and the Calf and the young Lion, and the Fatling together, and a little Child shall lead them.*

THESE, and such like Oracles, delivered by the ancient Prophets, had filled the *Jews* with such general Expectations of Tranquillity and Peace, under the auspicious Government of *Christ*, as made them impatient for his coming to free them from the *Roman* Yoak, and begin his Glorious and Triumphant Reign. Their Disappointment was great, and it hardened them in Infidelity, when they saw the blessed *Jesus*, who assumed this Character of the *Messiah*, appearing in a low and humble Form, submitting to Injury and Death, and leaving both them and his Disciples exposed to Miseries more grievous than any they had hitherto sustained. This was a Stumbling-Block they knew not how to remove; and it filled them with such Prejudice against the *Christian* Doctrine, as in all Ages since has kept them at a Distance from us, and even pushed them on to Blaspheme that very King and Saviour they pretend to expect.

FROM hence, therefore, instead of convincing the *Jews* and other Infidels of the Truth of our Religion, we find a most formidable Objection raised against it. The *Jews* were reduced, soon after its Publication, to the utmost Necessity; their Temple was demolished, their City broken up, and themselves dispersed throughout the whole World, without having been able, for well-nigh seventeen hundred Years, to collect into one Body again, or get restored to the Possession of their Country, and the Exercise of their Religion.

So

So that instead of being called home, they are spread more abroad than ever; and instead of being freed from their own mutual Jealousies, they are exposed as the publick Scorn and Derision of the World. Berriman.
Sermon
XI.

NOR were the Followers of *Jesus* themselves advanced upon the Ruins of *Jerusalem*: Their Master had expressly admonished them, that he *came not to send Peace, but a Sword*. He sent them to oppose the prevailing Corruptions and Prejudices of Mankind; and whilst they declared War for their Part against favourite Lusts and Inclinations, this could not fail in return to provoke the Opposition of those Persons, who were governed and acted by them. From hence he foretold, that they should not only be persecuted by the *Jews*, and *delivered up to the Synagogues*, but all the Powers of the *Heathen* World should be Confederate against them, and they should *be brought before Kings and Rulers for his Names sake*; that they should *be hated of all Men*, and meet with such outrageous Malice, as would even check the Motions, and extinguish the Flame of natural Affection; that they should *be betrayed both by Parents, and Brethren, and Kinsfolks, and Friends*; that *the Father* should *be divided against the Son, and the Son against the Father*; and Matters, in short, should come to this prodigious Heighth, that *whosoever* should kill them, would think *that he did God Service*. Nor was it only from without that such greedy *Wolves* might be expected to devour the Flock; but under the very Cloathing and Appearance of *Sheep*, there should be *Wolves* disguised; of their own selves should *Men arise, speaking perverse Things, to draw away Disciples after them*. Mat. x. 34.
Luke xxi. 12.
Ver. 16, 17.
Luke xii. 53.
John xvi. 2.
Acts xx. 29, 30.
Mat. vii. 15.

SUCH were the Warnings given to the Church, of its future Troubles and Vexations: Nor were they vain Predictions, but abundantly confirmed by the Histories of following Ages; which assure us how she was grievously distressed from without, by the Persecution of the Civil Powers; and distracted within, by Heresies and numerous Divisions. And though this may be an Argument of the Truth of *Christianity*, when 'tis considered as the Accomplishment of *Christian* Prophecies, yet withal it gives a plausible Handle to object against it, when 'tis compared with those Predictions of *Peace* and Security, which give out such a pompous Idea of the Reign of the *Messiah*. For how should that Character belong to him, who undertakes not, but *through much Tribulation*, to conduct Men to the Kingdom of God? It is a Question of Importance, and which well deserves our Enquiry, to give it Satisfaction. And though the Prophecies of *Peace* are of such different Sorts, some of them more general, others more particular, and pointing out the special Instances and Effects of it; some relating to one Period, and some to another; that there is no one Solution which will fit them all, or perfectly satisfy the Objection to be formed from them: Yet, upon a serious Consideration of the whole Matter, I judge it will appear, that the *Jews*, and such other Infidels as plead their Cause, are mistaken, throughout the Management of this Objection, in one or other of these three particulars, either, Acts xiv. 22.

FIRST, In the Nature of that *Peace* which the *Messiah* was to give: Or,

SECONDLY, In the Persons on whom he should bestow the Privilege. Or else,

THIRDLY, In the Time from which it should commence. And by detecting their Error in these several Particulars, we shall rationally account for all those Prophecies of *Peace*, which they are used to alledge against us upon this Occasion.

I. FIRST then, they are not rightly apprised of the Nature of that *Peace* which the *Messiah* was to give. Their carnal Desires of Temporal Prosperity, have given such a wrong turn to their Expectations from this promised Redeemer, that what the Scripture intends to point out Spiritual and Eternal Privileges, is by them restrained to the meaner Satisfaction which this Life supplies, the sensual Ease and Pleasures of an earthly *Canaan*. The *Jewish* Religion might instruct them better, that Sin has made a Separation between God

Berriman. God and Men; and that the greatest Benefit they can expect, is to have this
 Sermon Breach repaired, and be at *Peace* with him. The numerous Sacrifices ap-
 XI. pointed by the Law, having no inherent Virtue of their own, were necessary
 to be often repeated. But they were designed to figure out another Sacrifice,
 to be provided by Christ, which, being absolute in it self, should make those
 typical Atonements *cease*, and *bring in everlasting Righteousness*. This, though
 Dan. ix. as a *Priest*, he must offer up to God, yet as a *King*, he should bestow its Be-
 24, 27. nefits on Men; this being that perfect *Peace* and Reconciliation which *the*
 Rom. viii. *Law could not give, in that it was weak through the Flesh*, (having only a
 3. symbolical and outward Efficacy) and which *Christ* was therefore promised
 to secure to us. It was founded in the Acceptance of that Sacrifice he of-
 fered, from whence he is said by the Prophet *Isaiah*, to have been heard
 in an acceptable Time, and to proclaim the acceptable Year of the Lord:
 Isaiah xlix. 8. Intimating that his Intercession is heard in our behalf, and that we may
 Isaiah lxi. 2. hope to be accepted only in and through him. This is that *Peace of God*
 Phil. iv 7. *which passeth all Understanding*, vastly superior to all Temporal Felicity, in
 respect whereof the *Messiah* was promised as a *Prince of Peace*, and his Am-
 Isaiah ix. 6. bassadors, as they should *publish Peace* and Salvation, and *bring good Tidings*
 of good Things. For this Reason it is farther explained to consist in such
 Assurance or Confidence towards God, as was to be the genuine Result of
 that Righteousness introduced by the new Dispensation: *For the Work of*
 Isaiah xxxii. 17. *Righteousness shall be Peace, and the Effect of Righteousness, Quietness, and*
Assurance for ever.

ACCORDINGLY the Writings of the New Testament apply the Matter
 without Scruple or Difficulty. Therefore, says St. Paul, being justified (or
 made Righteous) by Faith, we have *Peace with God through our Lord Jesus*
 Rom. v. 1. *Christ, by whom we have now received the Atonement*. And in like manner our
 11. Lord himself, when he bequeathed this blessed Legacy to his Disciples, *Peace I*
 John xiv. *leave with you, my Peace I give unto you; not as the World giveth, give I unto*
 27. *you. In the World ye shall have Tribulation; but in me ye shall have Peace.*
 John xvi. 33. However, then all that would live Godly in Christ Jesus were taught to look
 2 Tim. iii. for *Persecutions* from without; yet the Kingdom of God was erected, and set up
 12. within them, that Kingdom which cometh not with outward Observation, but
 Luke xvii. 20, 21. consists in inward Righteousness, and Peace, and Joy in the holy Ghost. In con-
 Rom. xiv. sequence hereof they were instructed to possess their Souls in Patience; not
 17. to let their Heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid: They were filled with
 Luke xxi. 19. all Joy and Peace in believing: such inward Peace and Consolation as this World
 John xiv. 27. can neither give, nor take away.

AGAIN, as the Law could not offer this Peace from any Power of its own,
 Rom. xv. 13. or by the Letter of its Institution, but only from the typical Relation which
 it bore to Christ, so neither did it make its Proposals to any but the Seed of
 Abraham, and such as should conform to those Rites and Ceremonies which
 Moses had ordained. But under the Messiah this Difference of Nations was to
 be utterly abolished; the Blessing of Abraham was to descend on all the
 Kindreds of the Earth, and the Gentiles were to be received into the same
 Communion and Fellowship.

IT was shewn in the last Discourse, how the other Nations were to cleave
 to the House of Israel, and all to be incorporated into one Society, under one
 Head and Governor. Upon this the Prophets frequently insist as a principal
 Argument of Peace in the Messiah's Reign. Nor do the Jewish Writers them-
 selves disown the Character, provided we would suppose them to unite in
 the Observation of the Law of Moses. But since that Law was given for a
 Note of Distinction, whilst there was one Nation chosen before all others, and
 for a Prefiguration of that Privilege which should be granted to all; we insist,
 that upon the actual Proposal of such Privilege to all Nations, that Note of Dis-
 tinction, was of course abolished; so that there is now no longer Difference be-
 Rom. x. 12. *tween the Jew and the Greek, but they who sometimes were far off, are made*
nigh by the Blood of Christ. For he is our PEACE, who hath made both one,
and

and hath broken down the Middle Wall or Partition between us; having abolished in his Flesh the Enmity, even the Law of Commandments contained in Ordinances, for to make in himself, of twain, one new Man, so making PEACE. This is called, moreover, the Reconciling of Jews and Gentiles unto God in one Body, implying at once their Peace or Union with God, and Communion with one another.

Berriman.
Sermon
XI.

Eph. ii.
13, &c.

LASTLY, it may be proper to distinguish between the Nature of his Doctrine, and the Success of it. He certainly preached nothing but Unity and good Agreement of all Mankind, in Truth and Righteousness; and therefore gave Peace in the utmost Latitude, had Men but been in Humour to accept it. But if they chose to wrangle and strive among themselves, and to indulge such Passions and Prejudice, as kept his Peace from ruling in their Hearts, this ought not to be charged as any Fault of his Doctrine, which tended uniformly to remove those Obstructions, in order to secure so great a Privilege.

AND if the Jews now are so grievously mistaken in the Nature of that Peace which the Messiah was to give; they are no less so,

II. SECONDLY, in the Persons on whom he should bestow it. The Messiah being promised as the King of the Jews, and sitting on the Throne of David, they have from hence taken occasion to flatter themselves, that as soon as he appears, their whole Nation shall immediately receive and acknowledge him, and be entitled to the principal Favour and Privileges of his Government. And though they cannot deny but the Gentiles also shall be joined with them in the Enjoyment of the same Peace and Protection, yet this they admit only in Subordination to themselves, who were to have the Preference to all others, and be most eminently distinguished by the Care and Favour of their Sovereign. This may in some Sense be allowed, it being certain (as was represented in the last Discourse) that the Law was to go forth from Zion, and that the Heathen Nations, by being converted to it, were reckoned to cleave unto the House of Israel. From hence the Church of the Messiah, though consisting of People of all Nations, is sometimes described as the Jerusalem and Israel of God; and consequently the high Characters and Privileges appropriate to it, are not to be precisely understood of that City or those Inhabitants of Palestine literally considered, but rather of those faithful Adherents to their King and Saviour, who were grafted upon the ancient Stock, and of whom the Jews, collectively taken, were a Type and Figure.

MEAN while, the Peace which his faithful People should enjoy among themselves, hinders not but he and they might meet with Opposition from his Enemies, surrounded by them on every side; and though they never should be able to wrest out of his Hands the Reins of Government, yet should he have occasion to use Acts of Hostility and Judgment over them: He should judge among the Heathen, and strike through Kings in the Day of his Wrath: He should even break them with a Rod of Iron, and dash them in pieces like a Potter's Vessel: Sitting the mean while securely upon his holy Seat, without Hazard or Fatigue to himself, to smite the Earth with the Rod of his Mouth, and slay the Wicked with the Breath of his Lips. There is no Peace, says God, to the Wicked; they are not entitled to so great a Privilege: And therefore whatever Miseries are inflicted upon them, they ought not to be judged inconsistent with the Peace of Christ's Kingdom, since this is rather one Method he takes for the Peace and Welfare of his People, to dismay and confound their Enemies on every side, and is indeed necessary to the Notion of a perfect Governor, who looks to secure the Quiet of his Reign, by the utter Silence and Confusion of those who would disturb it. This the Prophet Micah thought no way inconsistent, but rather requisite to the Notion of Peace. This Man (says he, i. e. Christ) shall be the PEACE. And in what Way or Method he should effect so great a Privilege, he goes on to explain in the Words following:—When the Assyrian shall come into our Land, and when he shall tread in our Palaces, then shall we raise against him seven Shepherds, and eight principal Men; and they shall waste the Land of Assyria with the Sword, and the Land of Nimrod in the Entrances thereof. Thus shall he (viz. Christ, who is our Peace) deliver

Psal. cx.

5, 6.

Psal. ii. 9.

Isaiah xi.

4.

Isaiah

xlvi. 22

—lvii. 21.

Micah. v.

5, 6.

Berriman. us from the *Assyrian* when he cometh into our Land, and when he treadeth within
 Sermon
 XI. our Borders. The *Assyrian* here, as the most formidable Enemy of the *Jews* in the Time of that Prophet, does fitly represent those Enemies of the *Christian* Church, that rage against it with Vehemence and Bitterness. And therefore the Conquest to be obtained over him, must denote as well the utter Destruction of the Powers of Darkness, and those Men who are incorrigible in adhering to them, as the Conversion of those who are more docile and ingenuous; and both must be alike included in that *Peace* and Tranquillity, which the *Messiah* should assure to his chosen People.

NOR would the *Jews*, I conceive, have any Controversy with us upon this Head, provided it might be allowed them, that the Enemies who shall be thus destroyed, are to be found only in the *Gentile* World. But they cannot bear to hear, that so great a Part of their own Nation should be reputed Enemies to the *Messiah*, and as such excluded from the Privileges of his Kingdom. And yet nothing can be plainer, than that the Prophets have actually foretold how their Land it self should be smitten with a Curse, and the greatest Part of their Nation, if literally taken, should reject the *Messiah*, and so forfeit his Protection, that two Parts in three of them should be cut off, and die; and even the third Part, which remained, should be brought through the Fire, to be refined as Silver, and tried like Gold; when this *Messiah* should appear for that Purpose, like a Refiner's Fire, and like Fullers Sope; that he should indeed be for a Stone of stumbling, and for a Rock of Offence to both the Houses of Israel; for a Gin and for a Snare to the Inhabitants of Jerusalem; That many therefore among them should stumble and fall, and though the People of Israel were as the Sand of the Sea, yet a Remnant only should return, and be saved; That finally, that People should for a long Time abide without either King or Sacrifice, without the Privilege of Civil Government or instituted Worship, before they should be persuaded to accept the Salvation that was offer'd them, or return to seek the Lord their God, and David their King. These Passages do so aptly describe the State of that unhappy People, that the *Peace* of *Christ's* Kingdom may not be judg'd inconsistent with the Miseries which they endure; for if his Enemies are plainly excluded from his Favour and Protection, and they are so clearly included in the Number of his Enemies, what remains but that there is no *Peace* belonging to them, and that the *Peace* of his faithful Subjects will be best secured by the Reproach and Overthrow of unbelieving *Jews*?

YET after all, it is not to be disputed, but that some of the Prophecies relating to this Matter, do presage a more general Call and Restoration of the lineal Descendants of the Stock of *Abraham*; and withal, such universal *Peace* and Harmony, as consists not with so many Nations, subsisting upon Earth, in a State of Enmity and Opposition. But even there,

III. THIRDLY, The *Jews* are likewise mistaken in the Time from which those Blessings are to commence. For it is no where said, that the Church should immediately enjoy such perfect *Peace* and Security upon the first appearing of the King *Messiah*. Besides the Conquests we have seen he was to make over his Enemies, it was moreover foretold, that they should sometimes be suffer'd to prevail over his Church, and sow the Seeds of great Division and Perplexity, (the Son dishonouring his Father, and the Daughter rising up against her Mother; and a Man's Enemies being the Men of his own House) that so she might bear the Indignation of the Lord for the Sins which she had done against him.

SUCH Conquests then being foretold on one hand, such Divisions and Oppressions on the other, we ought no less to expect the Accomplishment of these Predictions, than of those which promise universal *Peace* and Harmony. It were most unreasonable to look for all at the same Point of Time, which ought to be expected rather in their several Orders and Degrees. The Persecutions of the Heathen World were broken off, when the Princes of the Earth gave in their Names into the Church of *Christ*, and laid those Scepters at his Feet, which had formerly been holden out with utmost Rage and Virulence against

against him. So that then *the Wolf* was seen to dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard to lie down with the Kid. And if some Parts of the Church have been since that over-run with barbarous Crews of *Saracens*, and other Infidels; if the World be not yet brought to such a peaceable Temper, as that Nation should not lift up Sword against Nation, neither should they learn War any more; if the Church be not so perfectly at Unity in it self, but that 'tis vexed with numerous Divisions; if the Fulness of the Gentiles be not yet come in, but many Nations lie buried in Turkish or in Pagan Ignorance; if the natural Posterity of *Abraham* be not yet collected into one Body, and converted to the Faith of *Christ*; nay, lastly, if Matters should be still worse than this, and the whole *Christian* Church only not extinguish'd by a general Apostasy; let us look upon all this as nothing more than the Accomplishment of former Prophecies, which being more obscurely involved in the Writings of the Old Testament, were more explicitly unfolded by *Christ* and his Apostles. And let it therefore be so far from shocking our Belief, in the *Messiah*, or discouraging our Expectation of the utmost Peace and Tranquillity under his Protection, as to incline us rather the more readily to submit to him, and more steadfastly to look for the Accomplishment of Prophecies not yet fulfilled. What we have seen accomplish'd, is a just Confirmation of what we still expect: And as 'tis most unreasonable in the *Jews*, to object against the *Christian* Religion, upon the Account of Prophecies not yet fulfilled, except they could assign some Character of the Time for their Completion, which is already expired, so we have a just Ground to argue against them, from those Prophecies which are actually fulfilled, that the *Messiah* is already come, since we have been Witnesses of many of those Events which were foretold to happen under his Government. We are taught how he should rule in the midst of his Enemies, surrounded by them on every side, till at last, after a due Trial of his Servants, they shall be made his Footstool, and all those who shall obstinately stand out against his Government, shall be entirely defeated and consumed by him. After this, shall all their Rage and Opposition cease; *Judah* shall be saved, and *Israel* shall dwell safely; the Mountains shall bring Peace to the People: and the Earth shall be full of the Knowledge of the Lord, as the Waters cover the Sea.

Berriman.
Sermon
XI.

Jer. xxii. 6.
Psal. lxxii.
3.
Isai. xi. 9.

I PRESUME not to say at what Distance of Time this glorious State of Things shall occur, nor in how conspicuous a Manner the *Prince of Peace* shall then exert his Authority, but had rather expect with Patience what the Scriptures have foretold, than go before them in determining the Circumstances of it. The Times and the Seasons are kept by the Father in his own Power; and the perfect Understanding of such glorious Privileges, is not to be learned by previous Descriptions, but by actual Fruition. Those secret Things belong unto the Lord; but the Things which are revealed, belong unto us; and so far, especially, as they are already fulfilled, they may be pertinently urged to confirm our Faith, and to quicken our Obedience.

Acts i. 7.

Deu. xxix.
29.

THUS much may suffice to have been said, for the clearing of those Prophecies of Peace, which occur in the Old Testament, as a distinguishing Character of the Reign and Times of the *Messiah*; and withal, to satisfy the Objection which is made by *Jews*, and other Infidels, against the *Christian* Scheme, as not having this Character or Token to produce. There remains but one Point more to be consider'd with relation to the Kingdom or Regal Character of the *Messiah*; and that is its Duration or Continuance: He shall reign over the House of *Jacob* FOR EVER; and of his Kingdom there shall be NO END. And the Stating of that Point will furnish Matter for another Discourse.

SERMON XII.

The perpetual Duration of the Kingdom of *Christ*.

Preached, *April* the 5th, 1731.

The Fourth SERMON on this TEXT.

LUKE i. 32, 33.

And the Lord God shall give unto him the Throne of his Father David. And he shall reign over the House of Jacob for ever; and of his Kingdom there shall be no End.

Berriman.
Sermon
XII.

THE Amplitude and Extent of the *Messiah's* Kingdom, as well as its Peace and Tranquillity, have so far been stated and explained in some preceding Discourses, as may give us a more august Idea of it, than can any way be applicable to the Times of *David* or *Solomon*, or any of their Successors, down to the Time of the Captivity; and therefore furnish out an Argument, that the Predictions relating to this Matter, were to have their Accomplishment in later Times, when a more glorious *Son of David* should hold the Reins of Government, and be acknowledged universal Lord and King. But still there is another Mark or Character of his Government behind, and that is its *Duration*; upon which the Prophets frequently insist, as a most eminent Distinction of it from all other Governments. This the Angel hath express'd in the Text:—*He shall reign over the House of Jacob FOR EVER, and of his Kingdom there shall be NO END.*

THE Expressions are very strong and emphatical, which do assure the Perpetuity of the Kingdom to the House of *David*, as it was at first predicted by the Prophet *Nathan*, and afterwards more fully stated and explained in the 89th Psalm. *I have made a Covenant with my Chosen, I have sworn unto David my Servant: So God was pleased, when he would shew the Immutability of his Counsel, to confirm it by an Oath! Thy Seed will I establish for Ever, and build up thy Throne to all Generations.—My Mercy will I keep for him for Evermore, and my Covenant shall stand fast with him: His Seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his Throne as the Days of Heaven.* If any one should apply this to *Solomon*, and those that succeeded him in secular Authority, he will not only be confuted by the Event, which shews that the regal Power was greatly diminished immediately upon his Death, and utterly lost in the Captivity at *Babylon*; but he may find some Intimation of those Changes in the Terms of the Prediction it self. For so it continues, — *If his Children forsake my Law, and walk not in my Judgments; if they break my Statutes,*

²Sam. vii.
12, &c.

Psal.

lxxxix. 3.

Heb. vi. 17.

Psal.

lxxxix. 28,

29.

Statutes, and keep not my Commandments; then will I visit their Transgressions with the Rod, and their Iniquity with Stripes. Yet still this should not reach to vacate the foregoing Covenant, or represent it as a Promise merely conditional. For again it is repeated.—Nevertheless my loving Kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my Faithfulness to fail. My Covenant will I not break, nor alter the Thing that is gone out of my Lips. Once have I SWORN by my Holiness, that I will not lye unto David. His Seed shall endure for Ever; and his Throne as the Sun before me: It shall be established as the Moon, and as a faithful Witness in Heaven. What should be collected from all this together, but that, though the Kingdom might be interrupted or cut off from the House of David, for the Iniquity and Disobedience of his Successors, (which is a Matter expressly confirmed by other Prophecies) yet there should in due Time arise ONE of his Posterity, in whom this Promise of an Everlasting Kingdom should be punctually fulfilled? Accordingly the Description is applied to one single Person in the seventy-second Psalm, *They shall fear thee as long as the Sun and the Moon endure, throughout all Generations.—In his Days shall the Righteous flourish, and abundance of Peace, so long as the Moon endureth.* —His Name shall endure for ever; his Name shall be continued as long as the Sun. Which Words, though variously explained by Interpreters^a, must yet contain a Sense that could not be verified in Solomon, or any other Temporal Prince upon the Throne of David. It were easy to add Passages from other Prophets, in Confirmation of this Point, that the Kingdom was not to be perpetuated by a Succession of many Princes, but by the Continuance of one, *that of the Increase of his Government and Peace, there shall be no End, upon the Throne of David, and upon his Kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with Judgment and with Justice, from henceforth, even for ever: That ONE like unto the Son of Man should receive Dominion and Glory, and a Kingdom; that all People, Nations, and Languages, should serve HIM: His Dominion is an everlasting Dominion, which shall not pass away, and his Kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.*

IT must, however, be acknowledged, that the Destruction of the Temporal Kingdom was a shocking Dispensation, such as the Faithful hardly knew how to reconcile with the Promises of Perpetuity; and though they expected the Accomplishment of them in due Time, yet were they grieved the mean while with the Reproaches and Objections of those who mocked at the Delay of them. To this Purpose is the Psalmist's Complaint,—*But thou hast cast off and abhorred, thou hast been wroth with thine Anointed; thou hast made void the Covenant of thy Servant; thou hast profaned his Crown, by casting it to the Ground.—Lord, where are thy former loving Kindnesses, which thou swarest unto David in thy Truth? Remember, Lord, the Reproach of thy Servant, wherewith thine Enemies have reproached—the Footsteps^b, i. e. (the Delay, or slow Coming) of thine Anointed, or Messiah.*

FOR this Reason the latter Prophets enlarge much in giving Satisfaction to this Difficulty: They undertake that the *Tabernacle of David* should be raised again, when it was fallen down; so that the *Mercy promised to David* should be still made sure, by raising up one in due Time of his Posterity to reign and prosper, and establish his Kingdom for ever. Now though some of these Descriptions of Perpetuity are express'd in such Phrases as do allude to Things of a Temporal Duration, (as long as the Sun and Moon endureth, and the like;) yet that

VOL. III.

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^a The first Clause is by the Targum explained, *his Name shall be remember'd; by the Seventy, let his Name be blessed, for ever.* The Words לפני שמש before the Sun, seem to have been understood by the Targum à parte ante, *his Name was prepared before the Sun was.* Which is agreeable to the Tradition of the Jews, that the Messiah's Name was fixed before the Creation. But if we should render it in Presence of the Sun, (which is the strict Import of the Phrase) i. e. commensurate, or together with the Sun, or (in our own Version) as long as the Sun, it will then contain the same Meaning with Ver. 5, and 7. As this Phrase stands in the middle between both Clauses, it might as well be joined with the first: *His Name shall endure for ever before the Sun.* The remaining Words נון שמו are supposed by some Jews to contain one of the Names of the Messiah: *His Name shall be Jinnon.* By others they are explained, *His Name shall make him a Son:* By others *his Name shall make Children,* i. e. Disciples: By others, *his Name shall be continued,* or perpetuated, as Children perpetuate the Name of their Fathers. Vid. Pol. Synops. criticor in loc.

^b See Bp. Chandler's Defence of Christianity, p. 223.

Berriman.
Sermon
XII.

Psal.
lxxxix. 30,
31, 32.

Ver. 83,
&c.

Psal.
lxxii. 5, 7.

Ver. 17.

Isaiah ix.
7.

Dan. vii.
14.

Psal.
lxxxix. 38,
39, 49, 50,
51.

Amos ix.

11.

Isa. liii. 3.

Jer. xxiii.

5.

Isaiah ix.

7.

Berriman.
Sermon
XII.

may be imputed to a poetical Representation of a Fact which could not be exemplified by any visible Thing exactly parallel; so that Things of a very long Continuance are not unaptly put for the Figures of that which is strictly and properly eternal. Besides that, if we understand this literally of his Kingdom's continuing to the End of the World, its eternal Duration will follow by an easy Consequence, there being no Ground to think of any Change or Alteration after that. We may the better trust to this Solution, when it is remember'd, that the Matter is otherwise set forth in such Variety of Expressions, not only mentioning this Kingdom to be eternal, but expressly denying any *Ending* or Cessation of it, that not even the Eternity of the supream Being can be set forth in stronger Terms, or more significant.

BUT there is one Text in the Old Testament, relating to this Matter, which being often urged and referred to in the New Testament, deserves a particular Examination in this Place. It is that Expression of *David* in the Hundred and tenth *Psalms*, at the first Verse; *The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right Hand, until I make thine Enemies thy Footstool*. Which Words, however the modern *Jews* would wrest them to *Abraham* or *David*, or any one, perhaps, rather than him to whom they really belong, were yet by their Forefathers more candidly interpreted, and allowed, upon convincing Reasons, to refer to the *Messiah*. He whom *David* in Spirit called his Lord, (which appears in that *David* is confessed by the Title for Author of the *Psalms*) must not only be some body distinct from him, but likewise, in a proper Sense, his Superior. And he who was at once possessed of *regal* Authority, and invested with eternal *Priesthood*, (both which Characters are ascribed to him in this same *Psalms*) could be neither *Abraham*, nor *David*, nor any of the Worthies of the Old Testament, or in the succeeding Times to *Christ*, in whom those Offices were rarely joined, and when they were, determined with their Lives. For which Reason, when our blessed Saviour urged this Text upon the *Pharisees*, to prove the Dignity of the *Messiah*, they had no Thought of evading his Argument, by denying any such Meaning of the Text, but were so compleatly silenced by it, that *not a Man* of them, *from that Day forth, durst ask him any more Questions*. From hence, the Writers of the New Testament took this Sense of the Prophecy for granted, and thought they had no need to prove what no Body disputed. And though the present *Targum* upon the *Psalms* has otherwise explained it, yet that is well known by learned Men to be a Writing of no great Authority, that appeared not till towards the Conclusion of the fourth Century; by which Time the *Jews* had their old Prejudices confirmed by new Forgeries, when their scattered Traditions were collected together, and no doubt enlarged. And it ought here to be mentioned in Commendation of the Candor of a noted and fair-dealing Interpreter among the *Jews*; namely, *R. Saadiab Gaon*, that in his *Comment* upon *Daniel**, he has illustrated that Prophet from this Passage of *David*, and ingenuously confessed, though contrary to the modern Prejudices of his Countrymen, that it refers to the Kingdom of the *Messiah*.

IT will, I suppose, be easily admitted that to be placed *at the right Hand of God* is a figurative Expression, and imports an Exaltation to a State of Dignity and Power, not only of silent Dignity, but active Power, whereby the Reign of the *Messiah* should commence, and his actual Exercise of Government. For, however some have conceived him to be here represented as SITTING indolent and unactive, whilst God should subdue his *Enemies* for him, and not beginning his Reign till they were brought under his *Footstool*, yet the Apostle has more justly taught us to date it earlier: *For he must Reign* (says he) *till he hath put all Enemies under his Feet*. The Words have plain Reference to this Passage of the *Psalms*—*Sit thou at my right Hand, until I make thine Enemies thy Footstool*. He is not after that to begin his Reign, but *he must Reign till then*; and his Investiture with such Authority is significantly set

Mat. xxii.
48.

1 Cor. xv.
25.

* *R. Saadiab Gaon* in *Dan*. vii. 13.

set forth by his Exaltation to the right Hand of God. Nay, and this very Act of regal Power too (the Act of subduing or putting down his *Enemies*) is indifferently ascribed in Scripture either to God or *Christ*. Sometimes God is said to make his *Enemies* his *Footstool*: And at other Times he is said to subdue all Things to himself. And therefore in this very *Psal*m, where God promises to make his *Enemies* his *Footstool*, we find him in the next Verse saying to the *Messiah*, (which argues him not silent or unactive in the Matter) — *The Lord shall send the Rod of thy Strength out of Zion; rule THOU in the midst of THINE Enemies.*

Berriman.
Sermon
XII.

Phil. iii.
21.

Psal. cx.
2.

BUT though the Phrase of *Sitting* is too rigorously strained by them who make it an Argument of Indolence and Inactivity, yet it may be fairly understood to import two Things, which are abundantly attested and confirmed by other Passages of Scripture: In the first Place, that his Reign is quiet and serene, not oppressed with Difficulties like the Kingdoms of the Earth, nor exposed to Changings or Uncertainties, so that he need not be travelling from Place to Place, to secure himself or his Dominion, but may safely keep still in his Throne, which is immoveable and fixed. For though his *Enemies* be mighty, and rage horribly, yet the Lord, who dwelleth on high, is mightier, and need be at no Expence or Trouble to defeat them, but can confound them at his Pleasure, with the Breath of his Mouth. In the next Place, that being thus secure in his Government, he remaineth moreover a King for ever; and as *Christ*, being raised from the Dead, is said in the New Testament to die no more, so being now at the right Hand of God exalted, his Glory shall sustain no Diminution or Decrease, neither any Cession of his own, nor the Will of his Father, nor the Malice of his *Enemies*, nor the longest Period that can be named, shall ever abolish or conclude his Government.

Psal. xciii. 4.
Isaiah xi. 4.

Rom. vi. 9.

AGAINST this it may indeed be objected, That the very *Psal*m from which we argue for the Perpetuity, does really suggest that there will be a certain Period of his Government, when it makes mention of his reigning no longer, than till his *Enemies* be made his *Footstool*: Sit thou at my right Hand, untill I make thine *Enemies* thy *Footstool*. Now whatever Order be observed in conquering the rest of his *Enemies*, the Devil, Antichrist, and Sin, (and if there be any others that come under the same Character) yet the Apostle says expressly, the last Enemy that shall be destroyed is Death. And when that shall be, it is easy to resolve; namely, at the Day of general Judgment, when all dead Bodies shall revive, the Wicked shall be sentenced to eternal Misery, the Righteous rewarded with eternal Happiness, and Death thereby be swallowed up in Victory. From whence it may be thought, that *Christ's* Reign shall last no longer than till the Consummation of Ages, when he shall see this final Conquest and Destruction of his *Enemies*. For if he only was to reign, till his *Enemies* were made his *Footstool*, or subdued unto him; and Death, which is the last and most stubborn Enemy, shall be then entirely vanquished and destroyed, it may seem to some a necessary Consequence, that then his Reign shall cease with the Opposition of his *Enemies*; and so the Predictions of the Old Testament may be charged with Inconsistency in this Matter, and the Doctrine of the Perpetuity of *Christ's* Kingdom, with being built on a ruinous Foundation.

1 Cor. xv. 26.

Ver. 54.

BUT however plausibly this Objection may be represented to a common Reader, yet they must be perfect Strangers to the Hebrew Idiom, and the manifest Propriety of Scripture Language, who are not sensible that the Word UNTIL is often used only inclusively of the Time before, without importing an Exclusion of that which is to come. So that it is a good Argument of *Christ's* reigning at present, and till the Consummation of Ages (in Opposition to the forementioned Conceit of his Silence and Inactivity) but not of his Abdicating then, or ceasing to Govern any longer. Rather the Phrase which follows does strongly imply the contrary: For to what End should his *Enemies* be made his *Footstool*? Surely to increase the Glory of his Majesty, and not to put an End to it; to raise his Empire to a more flourishing Condition, and not to abolish

or

Berriman.
Sermon
XII.

or take it from him. A *Footstool*, though not honourable in itself, yet adds to the Honour of the Person it supports, and implies him to be seated on a Throne. And therefore since *these Enemies* subdued are to be made his *Footstool*, it must be most unreasonable to suppose that his Empire should conclude with their Opposition, when it will but shine forth with more conspicuous Lustre.

T H E R E may be greater Difficulty in another Passage in the first Epistle to the *Corinthians*, which some have thought an unanswerable Argument to this Purpose. And though it is a Point which has been controverted among *Christian* Writers, yet since it may also be objected by Infidels as an Inconsistency in the *Christian* Scheme, it will not be improperly considered in this Place. *Then cometh the End* (says the Apostle) *when he shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father, when he shall have put down all Rule, and all Authority and Power. And when all Things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject* (or subordinate) *unto him that put all Things under him, that God may be all in all.*

1 Cor. xv.
24, 28.

F R O M hence some have concluded ^d, that *Christ's Mediatorial Kingdom* shall be abrogated, when the End of his *Mediation* is accomplished; that as he received it by Commission from the Father, so he shall surrender it again. And then what will become of those Texts already mentioned, which speak in such strong Terms of the eternal Duration of his Government? They would suppose, perhaps, an *Hyperbole* in the Expression, and alledge that those Things, which are only of a very long Continuance, are represented as if they were really endless in Duration. But neither the Reason of the Thing, nor the Propriety of the Expressions, will lead us into this Solution, meerly because urged with a single abstruse Text, which perhaps might be otherwise accounted for.

O T H E R S again have attempted ^e to reconcile the seeming Difference, by distinguishing between *Christ's Kingdom* considered as *Messiah* and *Mediator*, and have thought that the former should *have no End*, but the latter might. But this, under Favour, I conceive to be a Distinction without a Difference, because he is called the *Messiah* in the same Respects, and for the same Reasons, as he is the *Mediator*, as being *anointed* to his sacred Offices, and so appointed to *mediate* between God and Men. His Kingdom therefore, as *Messiah*, and as *Mediator*, is the same; and it must be vain to expect any Advantage from so groundless a Distinction.

B U T there are two other Ways of accounting for the Matter, which seem liable to less Exception. In the first Place it is certain that great Part of his regal Office will cease of course, when he shall have subdued his Enemies, rewarded his Servants, and done granting those Aids and Assurances, which are necessary for this State of Trial and Temptation. Consequently he may then, in some Sense, be said to deliver up his Kingdom, as forbearing to execute those Parts of his Office, which are proper only for the present Condition of the Church Militant. But still he may preside over the glorious Members of his Church Triumphant; he may head them in their Praises, he may exercise such Acts of Government, as we cannot fully understand, till we are ourselves translated to that State of Glory.

T H I S accounts, in some measure, for the Surrendry of the Kingdom, without supposing it to be really abolished. Or it may be said, (which is the other Method of Solution) that by *delivering up the Kingdom to the Father*^f, is only meant the referring it to him as Head, and first in Order; that when once Christ has subdued all Things to himself, and brought his faithful Servants to consummate Glory, they will then be referred up to the Father, as his *Peculium* likewise in and through Christ, who is himself referred to the same Father as his Head. And then as to that *Subjection* or Subordination of the *Son*, which the Apostle mentions, it is not to be imagined that any *new* Subordination shall then commence, which had no Existence before; that (as a late Writer well expresses

^d Whitby in loc. Outram. de Sacrif. in fine.

^e Limborch Theolog. Christiana, Lib. 3. cap. 25. § 14.

^f See Remarks on Dr. Clarke's Catechism, p. 42, 43.

expresses it) "*The Son will then be more Subject than he is now; that his triumphant State shall come short of his Militant; and that he is to decrease, when all his Saints and Servants are to increase. No: But as he was always subordinate to the Father as a Son, so will he then be also;*" and that Subordination will be more amply displayed and declared, "*when he shall have subdued all Enemies, and shall bring all his Friends with him, uniting them by himself, the Band and Cement of Union with the Father. Then shall he reign in Peace, and of his Kingdom shall be no End. His Father also shall reign by him and with him, and be acknowledged still as his Head and Father, to whom he is referred.*" To this Purpose he is represented as making, together with the Father, but *one Temple, and one Light, and sitting on the same Throne*; and it is accordingly proposed as the utmost of our Hopes and Ambition, *that we also shall reign with him*: Which does not surely imply that his Reign or Government shall be abolished, but rather that it shall shine out with greater Splendor, and display itself with more Advantage.

THERE is indeed mention, in the Scripture, of a temporary Reign of *Christ*, in which his faithful Servants are to *live and reign with him*. Blessed and holy is he that hath Part in the first Resurrection: On such the second Death hath no Power; but they shall be Priests of God, and of *Christ*, and shall reign with him a thousand Years. I forbear to enter on any critical Enquiry into the precise Meaning of these Words, lest I should be led off to a Dispute foreign to my Purpose in this Place. It shall suffice at present to observe that this Passage, whatever it intends, cannot be inconsistent with the eternal Duration of *Christ's* Kingdom, but taken with the whole Context, does really confirm it; because those *thousand Years* are represented to expire before the last Troubles of the Church, and the final Condemnation of the Devil and his Adherents, after which the *Throne of God and of the Lamb* is said to be made conspicuous in the heavenly *Jerusalem*, where there shall no more be Night, but his Saints and Servants shall reign with him for ever and ever. So that here is plainly a Reign to all Eternity, and World without End, spoken of as subsequent or consequential to that other temporary Reign which was to endure but a *thousand Years*. So much as this I thought it might be fit to observe, in order to vindicate those Texts which speak of the *Perpetuity* of *Christ's* Kingdom, as no way contrary to others, which, if taken by themselves, might be thought to intimate a finite or temporary Duration.

THUS far we have consider'd those Predictions which concern the Kingdom and Reign of the *Messiah*. Under that View, the Notices of him were most commonly dispensed after the Erection of the Monarchy in the House of *David*. And in that Light it continu'd whilst that Royal Family preserv'd its Empire in *Judea*. Nay, and in and after the *Babylonish* Captivity, there were such Promises of the Restoration of the Kingdom, as could be compleated in nothing else but the Reign and Times of the *Messiah*, such as filled the *Jews* with earnest Expectations of him under the Character of a potent and victorious Prince. We have view'd these ancient Notifications of the *Messiah* in his Regal Character, under different Respects and Considerations. The Amplitude and extent of his Kingdom has been shewn to be such as takes in the whole habitable World, uniting all Nations into one Society, and making them subject to one Empire and Authority. And though the effecting of such Enlargement be a Work of Time, and admits of much Opposition and Obstruction from Enemies, till they be conquered and subdued; yet such is the Success already obtain'd over them, both in Kind and Degree, as justly confirms our Expectation of a farther Progress, till the whole *Earth* be full of the Knowledge and Glory of the Lord, as the Waters cover the Sea. Again, the Peace and Tranquillity of his Government has been set forth by the same Prophets in very pompous and magnificent Descriptions: And as this is partly fulfilled in that inward Joy and Consolation, which is dispensed at present by the secret Influences of the Holy Ghost, and in the Conversion of many Nations

Berriman.
Sermon
XII.

that had persecuted and opposed it; this confirms our Hopes that it shall hereafter be more perfectly accomplished, and nothing shall be left to disturb the Peace and Quiet of his Reign. Lastly, the *Duration* of his Government has been shewn to be everlasting, and World without End, meeting indeed, at first with Struggle and Opposition, but at length triumphing over all, and breaking out in endless Glory and Perfection. For though some Acts of Government are suited only to a State of Warfare, and therefore must cease of course, when all Enemies shall be subdued; yet then the Splendor of his Majesty will appear the more illustrious, and display it self in fuller Beauty, in Proportion as a State of Triumph is more glorious than a State of War.

BESIDES this Regal Character of *Christ*, which has been so largely stated and explained from the *Psalms* of *David*, and the following Prophets, it might be observed, that many other Characters are intermix'd, relating to his Life and Actions, and describing some particular Incidents that should befall himself, or that he should be the Ground and Occasion of to others; such as his Birth of a *Virgin*, and at *Bethlehem*, his entering into *Jerusalem* in humble Triumph, his working divers Kinds of salutary Miracles, his preaching glad Tidings to the Poor, and other Matters which might be reckon'd up in great Variety. But as it was not my Intention to discourse distinctly of every particular Prophecy, so neither can I judge it necessary to our View and Purpose; which is to give such an Account of Prophecy in every Period, as may shew us how the same Expectation, which was encouraged from the Beginning, was constantly kept up in all succeeding Times, and gradually open'd and unfolded more and more, to those who attended to the general Scope and Tenor of the Prophetick Writings.

ONLY there is one Circumstance so singular and extraordinary, that it deserves a more particular Consideration and Attention than the rest. It was declared to our first Parents, that the *Seed of the Woman* should have his Heel bruised by the *Serpent*. This has been explain'd to mean the Suffering of Death; and that Exposition was probably confirm'd to them by the Appointment of those bloody Sacrifices, which we find to have obtain'd in the earliest Antiquity. The same was afterwards typically represented in *Abraham's* intentional Oblation of his Son, in the Erection of the *Brazen Serpent*, in the Institution of the *Paschal Lamb*, and other Sacrifices of the Law: All which might reasonably be understood to refer to that Annoyance, which this promised Redeemer should sustain from our grand Enemy, when he undertook the Work of our Redemption. But when *David*, and the following Prophets, had drawn out the Regal Character of this great Deliverer, in such strong and lively Colours; it was proper, lest the Notion of his *Sufferings* should seem to be excluded by the Pomp and Majesty of their Descriptions, it was proper (I say) that some fuller and more express Declaration should be added of the *Sufferings* to which he should be expos'd, and the Tendency which they should have to the perfecting of that promised Redemption.

It was also suitable to the gradual Method of Discovery which is usual in Divine Revelation, that this, as well as the brighter Part of his Character should be open'd by Degrees, and more explicitly unfolded, as the Time of its Accomplishment drew nearer on. Accordingly, we find the Prophets, and particularly *David* and *Isaiah*, have drawn out this humble Part of the *Messiah's* Character, and have made it as necessary a Mark or Token of him to suffer, as to reign; necessary, as well to fulfil the Predictions which have spoken of him, as to effect the Salvation of his chosen People. But the fuller Stating of this Point will deserve our Attention in a Discourse by it self.

Now to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, &c.

SERMON

SERMON XIII.

The Sufferings of *Christ* previous to his Kingdom.

Preached, May the 3d, 1731.

The First SERMON on this TEXT.

LUKE xxiv. 25, 26.

—O Fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have spoken. Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his Glory?

IT was intimated in the Conclusion of the last Discourse, that the expected Redeemer of Mankind has been from the Beginning represented under a twofold Character; namely, in a State of *Suffering*, and in a State of *Glory*: That this was implied in the original Prediction at the Time of Man's Apostasy, where the *Seed of the Woman* is foretold to have Victory over the *Serpent*, in the *bruising* of his *Head*, but not without such Sufferings from him in the mean time, as are express'd under the Figure of being *bruised* by him in the *Heel*; that it was farther taught by the Prescription of bloody Sacrifices, and other significant Types and Symbols, upon which I forbear to expatiate at this time.

Berriman.
Sermon
XIII.

BUT because in that Period of time which we have last consider'd, the brighter side of his Character is usually insist'd on, and drawn out in the most pompous Descriptions, when, upon occasion of the Erection of the *Jewish* Monarchy, the Benefits of our Redemption are represented under the figure of a Kingdom, and described in such Terms as bespeak a Majestick Grandeur and Magnificence: Lest such pompous Descriptions should efface the Expectation of an humbler State, and all Notion of the Means by which such Benefits were to be procured; it was now highly proper that some more express Declarations should be added, concerning this suffering State of the *Messiah*, and the great Atonement to be made by him. Accordingly we read, both in the Psalms of *David*, and in the Writings of the following Prophets, but particularly of the Prophet *Isaiab*: We read several Predictions that are full and explicit to this purpose.

THE *Jews*, however, were generally better pleased with attending to the brighter side of the *Messiah's* Character, and as their Commonwealth had gradually declined and sunk into an abject State, they were eagerly expecting the Advent of this promised Deliverer, to raise it to the greatest Splendour; and in the warmth of such Expectation, they seem to have forgot the Description of those Hardships and Sufferings, which he was first to undergo. Even the Disciples

Berriman. Disciples of *Jesus* were not clear from this national Prejudice. *They knew not*
 Sermon XIII. *what the Rising from the Dead should mean*; not that they were Strangers to the
 Mark ix. 10. Doctrine of the general Resurrection, but they look'd upon *Christ's* dying at all,
 and more especially by Force and Violence, as inconsistent with their Notions
 of the *Messiah*, and tending to frustrate their Hopes and Expectations. And
 therefore *Peter* had the Confidence even to rebuke his Master, with a — — *be it*
 Mat. xvi. 22. *far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee.* Our gracious Lord was
 pleas'd, in some preparatory Discourses, to assure them of his approaching
 Death and Resurrection. Yet still such was their *Slowness of Heart*, and Dul-
 ness of Apprehension, that even these divine Discourses did not remove their
 Prejudice, but they were strangely surprized and confounded at his Death; in-
 somuch that they began to despond and suspect they had been mistaken, whilst
 Luke xxiv. 21, 22, &c. *they trusted it had been he which should have redeemed Israel*; and found an
 encrease of their Astonishment, but no Conviction, from the first Reports
 which were brought them of his Resurrection. Such was the Discourse and Rea-
 soning of the two Disciples that were walking to *Emmaus*, when *Jesus* unknown
 join'd himself to their Company, and took occasion to upbraid them in the
 Words that have been read — — *O Fools, and slow of heart to believe all that*
 Ver. 25, 26. *the Prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to*
enter into his Glory? This gave him a handle more fully to open and explain
 the Passages which they had over-look'd or misunderstood; so that *beginning*
 Luke xxiv. 27. *at Moses and all the Prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the*
things concerning himself; and those things (we may presume) more especially,
 which related to his Death and Sufferings, the Ground of their present Misgiv-
 ings and Despondency.

IT would be a matter of too great length and compass, nor is it needful to
 my present Design, to explain at large every thing of this kind that occurs in
 the Writings of the Old Testament. It may suffice to shew that the thing
 had been predicted, and that the ancient *Jews* themselves do appear not to have
 been wholly ignorant of it, tho' their Sentiments were not altogether con-
 sistent upon this head. The most remarkable Prophecy of this kind, is that
 of the 52d and 53d of *Isaiah*, in which some eminent Person is described under
 the Title of *the Servant of the Lord*, who should go thro' a great deal of un-
 deserved Shame and Suffering, even unto Death, for the sake and benefit of
 other People, who should endure all Indignities with the greatest Meekness and
 Patience, even offering himself to them of his own accord, and at last should
 be highly honour'd and exalted, in reward of his Obedience, and see the Suc-
 cess of all his Sufferings in the *Justification* of those whose *Iniquities* he had
born, and in their Admission to *divide the Spoil* of his Enemies, and enjoy a State
 of Glory and Happiness with him.

THE principal thing to be observ'd for the Explication of this Passage, is
 the Unity of Character, which runs throughout the whole. It is one and the
 same Person, the same *Servant of the Lord*, that is spoken of from beginning
 to end, that, without any Demerit of his own, met with such Reproach and
 ignominious Treatment, that submitted to it with such Willingness and Refig-
 nation, that procured by it such Pardon and Privilege to other People, that
 was recompenc'd at last with such abundant Honour and Glory. And who
 then could be the Person, to whom all these Characters agreed without any
 Strain or Violence put upon the Words, without any Breach or Violation of
 that Unity which the whole Contexture of the Place requires? There are
Jews that would persuade us, their Nation in its present State of Exile and
 Captivity, is here design'd under the Figure of a single Person. But besides
 that this does ill accord with the extravagant Relations they sometimes give us
 of the flourishing Condition of their People in some unknown Countries of the
East, where they pretend they are possess'd of ample Dominions, in great Splen-
 dour and Authority^a, in order to evade the Force of *Jacob's* Prophecy, con-
 cerning

^a Vid. *Abrab. Peritfol. Itinera Mundi*, cap. 14. item *Benjam. Itinerar.* pag. 123. edit. *Amst.* 1633. cum
L'Empereur Dissert. ad Lectorem.

cerning the Continuance of the *Scepter* in the Tribe of *Judab*: Besides that there is no colour to be alledg'd for their enduring such Hardships in any Country, as may answer the Descriptions of the Prophet in this Passage: Besides that the suffering Person is expressly distinguish'd from the People of God, for whose Transgression he was stricken, and who are represented to observe and acknowledge the greatness of his Sufferings: Besides all this, I say, which might reasonably be objected to this Interpretation; will any one be such an Advocate for the Virtue of the *Jews*, as to pretend that they are free from Blame or Wickedness, and suffer without any Fault or Demerit of their own? Can it be said, that they submit without complaint or murmuring? Above all, can it enter into any one's Imagination, that their Sufferings should expiate the Sins of other People? That they should see the Success and Efficacy of them in the Pardon and Justification of many? That they should be satisfied with this Fruit of their Sufferings, and observe this Pleasure of the Lord to prosper in their hands?

Berriman.
Sermon
XIII.

THE like Exceptions may be made against any Application of this Prophecy to King *Josiah*, which is another Method whereby the *Jews* endeavour to evade the force of it. He was indeed a pious Prince, and has honourable mention made of him in the sacred Scriptures. But the Expedition in which he fell at *Megiddo*, was no advantage to his Character. It was rashly undertaken^b, not only without just Provocation, but against the express Warning and Command of God^c. His Death therefore was manifestly the Punishment of his own Sin and Temerity; and it was so far from being voluntarily chosen or submitted to by him, that he fell by the hands of that very Enemy whom he was aiming to destroy. Much less had it the Virtue of an Expiation or Atonement; it averted not the divine Vengeance from the People of the *Jews*, but left them exposed to the Ravages of the *Chaldeans*, who, a few Years after, led them captive into *Babylon*. Nor is it the least Prejudice to both these Interpretations, that besides straining and perverting divers of these Characters, they are forc'd sometimes to change and diversify the Person or Subject of whom they are spoken; whereas the Contexture of the whole Discourse does clearly answer him to be one and the same.

THERE is no better Pretence for applying it to the Prophet *Jeremy*, which is a Notion that has not only been advanced among the *Jews*, but unhappily espoused by an eminent Christian Expositor^d; who seems unwilling to have it thought, that the ancient People of God should be so far let into the Knowledge of Gospel-Mysteries. *Jeremy* underwent indeed great Trials and Afflictions, but not with the greatest Equanimity and Patience, not without some manifest Tokens of Reluctance and Unwillingness. Nor does it appear that his Life was ended after all by Violence, and much less that his Death

VOL. III.

(8 O)

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^b This Expedition of *Josiah* is defended by Dr. *Prideaux*, (*Connect. of the Hist. of the O. and N. Test. ad annum 610.* Vol. I. book I. page 41. Folio) as the Result of that Homage he owed to the King of *Babylon* or *Affyria*, to whom he supposes the Kings of *Judab* had taken an Oath of Fidelity, ever since the Captivity of *Manasseh*, 2 Chron. xxxiii. 11. in like manner as *Zedekiah* is expressly observed to have done afterwards, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 13. the Breach of which Oath is upbraided by God in the Prophet *Ezekiel*, as a very grievous Sin, Ezek. xvii. 13—19. But to this it may be replied, that the account we have of *Manasseh's* Captivity is so short and concise, that there is very little to be built upon it. To be sure there was no such compleat Conquest of *Judea*, as that in *Zedekiah's* time, and probably no Oath of Fidelity. Or if there was, the Government was now in other hands: *Nabopolassar* had by Rebellion wrested it out of the hands of the Successor of *Esarhaddon*, who had taken and restored *Manasseh*, and to whom, if to any one, the Oath of Fidelity was made. See *Prideaux ad ann. 626, & 612.* And as to the Dominion which *Josiah* seems to have had over the Country of the ten Tribes, he might probably take this occasion to seize it to himself, without holding it from this new Family, to which he could have no Obligation.

^c This appears not only from the words of *Pharaoh Necho*,—God commanded me to make haste; forbear thee from meddling with God, who is with me, that he destroy thee not, 2 Chron. xxxv. 21. but also from the words of the sacred Historian, who charges *Josiah* in the next Verse, with not hearkening unto the word of *Necho* from the mouth of God. It is not certain indeed, by what means the King of *Egypt* had this Knowledge of the Will of God, whether by the Prophet *Jeremy*, or any other way. But it must be presumed, that so pious a Prince as *Josiah* did not give credit to him, else he would never have persisted in his Resolution. And so the matter was a Sin of Ignorance: To which the *Syriac* and *Arabic* Versions agree, when they say that *Josiah* knew not that it was from God.

^d Grotius in loc.

Berriman. Sermon XIII. was a means of appeasing the Wrath of God, and averting his Vengeance from Transgressors.

AFTER such ill Success in the Persons pitch'd upon by modern *Jews*, it will be in vain to look for any other besides Him, to whom the Targum of *Jonathan*, and the more ancient *Jewish* Rabbins^e, have with one consent applied some Passages of this Section, and particularly the first words of it; namely, the *Messiah*. This is a glaring Evidence of the ancient traditionary Exposition of the whole: It is such as their Successors know neither how to disown, nor to gainsay: But in order to elude the force of it, there have two Pretences been devised, which are neither consistent with the Text, nor countenanced by what remains of that ancient Exposition.

SOMETIMES it is suggested, that they meant only to apply the first Verse of this Section (as it stands distinguish'd among them) to the *Messiah*^f, where he is introduced under a pompous Character, as one that should *be exalted and extolled, and be very high*; which three words, the same Ancients have explain'd to intimate his being *exalted above Abraham, and extolled beyond Moses, and higher than the Angels of God*^g. And then it is thought the following humbler Characters may be reasonably attributed to some other Person. But let any one read over the whole with Seriousness and Attention, and say if there be any room for such an arbitrary disjoining of Passages that are connected, and if it be not therefore more reasonable to believe, that they who applied the Beginning of this Prophecy to *Christ*, would understand the Continuation of it in the same Sense. Besides, it is certain, and has been pertinently observ'd by others^h upon this Argument, that some Parts of the suffering Character have been actually expounded by the ancient *Jews* to belong to the *Messiah*, who have likewise spoke in plain terms of the Afflictions which he was to endure, as *a third Part of the Afflictions* which were to happen in the World.

AT other times, when the Authority of the Ancients appears too full and express for this afflicted and suffering State of the *Messiah*, they have then recourse to another Fiction of two *Messiahs*; one of which should be the *Son of David*, a flourishing and potent Prince, but the other a miserable and afflicted Man, descended of the Tribe of *Joseph*, who, attempting to rescue the *Jews* from their Captivity, should have so few Adherents resort to him, that he should easily be slain in War, and his Party crush'd by their Oppressorsⁱ.

BUT this, in the first place, is merely arbitrary and precarious; there being no foundation, besides their own Dream or Conceit, for ascribing that Title to any of the Sons of *Joseph*. Let them shew us any Text of Scripture; Let them at least produce some Tradition of their own Nation more ancient than the *Gemara*, or Supplement of the *Talmud*, and the later *Targums*, which give them reason to expect any more than one *Messiah*, and him the *Son of David*. In the next place, how blind and confused is that occasional Mention which these Writings have made of him? So doubtful and undetermin'd in it self, and so little consistent with other *Jewish* Notions^k, that *Maimonides* thought fit to leave it out, when he collected the Traditions which relate to the *Messiah*; and the other Expositors who do retain it, appear but little agreed, either as to the Certainty or Reason of his coming, or as to the Ground of his Sufferings, or his Right to assume the royal Title, which they otherwise confine to the Posterity of *David*.

AGAIN,

^e This is confess'd by *Abarbanel* in loc.

^f *Abarbanel* comment. ex Edit. L'Empereur, pag. 58.

^g **השרת ירום מאברהם ונשא משה ונה ממלאכי** Ita prisci Sapientes apud *Abarbanel* in loc. pag. 4. And this agrees well with the Author to the *Hebrews*, who has given the same Preference to the *Messiah*.

^h L'Empereur, Annot. ad *Abarbanel* in *Isai*. pag. 52. & ad *Jalkut*. pag. 285. See also Bishop *Chandler's* Defence of Christianity.

ⁱ This *Messiah Ben-Joseph* is mention'd by *Pseudo-Jonath.* in *Exod.* xl. 11. *Targ.* in *Cant.* iv. 5. *Talm. Babyl.* tract. *Succab.* c. *Hachalil.* i. e. cap. 5. fol. 52. 1. and from thence by many modern Rabbins. See this whole Matter discuss'd by Dr. *Pocock*, in the Appendix to his Comment on *Malachi*.

^k Vid. *Pocock* ut supra.

AGAIN, what is the Use or Office of this other *Messiah* they speak of in the Tribe of *Joseph*? All the great Benefits which the Prophets have foretold, they look for only from the *Son of David*; so that the *Son of Joseph* appears to be no other than a Fiction of their own, invented only to serve a turn, and give a lame Account, rather than none, of that mention which is made of the Afflictions and Sufferings of the *Messiah*, from which they will needs have the *Son of David* to stand clear and exempt.

BUT, which is most of all considerable, if we should admit their Fiction of two such different Persons, it could neither help them in the Explication of this Text of *Isaiab*, nor in accounting for the traditionary Exposition of their ancient Doctors. It was observ'd before, that the Unity of Character which runs throughout the whole Prophecy, does oblige us to understand one and the same Person to be here described under the humbler Characters of Grief and Sufferings, and under the more exalted ones of Honour and Triumph. If then it was King *Messiah*, the *Son of David*, who was to be exalted and extolled, and to be very high, in whose hands the Pleasure of the Lord should prosper, who should see his Desire and be satisfied, dividing the Portion of the great, and the Spoil of the strong; it must be the same Son of David, that was to be despised and rejected of Men, that was to be wounded for our Transgressions, and being brought as a Lamb to the Slaughter, was to make his Soul an Offering for Sin. Accordingly, it has been observ'd, that some of these Characters are expressly refer'd, by the ancient Exposition of the *Jews*, to the same *Messiah*, that was to reign and prosper. So that the modern Fiction of two different *Messiahs* is not only groundless and absurd in it self, but altogether unapplicable to that purpose, for the sake of which it was invented. But in the *Christian* Scheme, the whole matter is smooth and intelligible, without any difficulty: The same Person, who first endured great Reproach and Indignity, and offered himself an expiatory Sacrifice, was afterwards raised to a State of Glory, and the highest Exaltation. These then are the Parts to be stated and consider'd distinctly, as being both predicted in the Old Testament, and accomplish'd in the New.

- I. THAT he should voluntarily yield or expose himself to Sufferings.
- II. THAT these Sufferings should have an expiatory Virtue, or make Atonement for Sin. And,
- III. THAT they should be previous to his State of Exaltation and Triumph, which is mention'd as consequent upon them.

I. FIRST, that he should voluntarily yield or expose himself to Sufferings. That he should be subject to Sufferings, is taught in such a Variety of Expressions, that there can be no room or colour to dispute it. And it is indeed the Certainty and Clearness of this Point, which has put the *Jews* upon trying so earnestly to change the Person, that the Passage (if possible) might be applied to any other, rather than their King *Messiah*. But as they have not been able to fix on any Person, to whom all the Parts of the Character agree; so particularly this, which I have mention'd, of his voluntary Submission, Resignation and Patience, is implied in that he is said to be brought as a Lamb to the Slaughter, and as a Sheep before her Shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. So meek and passive a Behaviour must be the Result of the most perfect Resignation, and altogether inconsistent with any measure of complaint or murmuring under the weight of his Affliction. So that this Character plainly agrees neither to *Josiah*, nor *Jeremy*, nor the People of the *Jews*, nor to any other, to whom their Expositors might be glad to apply so important a Prediction. But to the blessed *Jesus*, whom we receive under the Character of the *Messiah*, it agrees perfectly well. He was not more remarkable for the Greatness of the Sufferings he underwent, than he was for his great Patience and Resignation, and the exemplary Meekness of his Carriage under them.

Isaiab
liii. 7.

Berriman.
Sermon
XIII.

them. The End of his Sufferings, indeed, had been otherwise defeated; whether we consider them as matter of Example or Atonement, as confirming the Truth of the Doctrine he had taught, or procuring the Salvation he had promised: I say, the End had been entirely defeated, if his Submission to such Sufferings had not been altogether free and voluntary, but the meer Result of Compulsion and Constraint, and rigidly imposed upon him by superior Force, or inexorable Fate. The *Jewish* Victims indeed, which were only symbolical or typical Atonements, and derived their whole Virtue from that relation they bore to this future perfect Sacrifice, they might be dragg'd or driven to the Altar, and there bleed out their last, constrain'd by such force, as they were not in Condition to resist. But it became the Antitype himself, even to *carry his Cross*. He was so far from shrinking from the Difficulty, that he gave himself up with the most perfect Resignation to his Father's Will: So far from *reviling* or uttering Imprecations against his Persecutors, that he offer'd up the tenderest Prayers for them, even whilst he was expiring by their Malice. *For this very end was he born*, and came into the World, that he might redeem us by his Death; and tho' he could have summon'd *more than twelve Legions of Angels* to his Rescue, yet he chose rather to wave his Power, and (as the Scripture emphatically speaks) to *GIVE HIMSELF a Ransom for all*. And that was the,

II. SECOND thing considerable in *Isaiab's* Prophecy, that these Sufferings should have an *expiatory* Virtue, or make Atonement for Sin. There are many Expressions to this purpose, in the Prophecy before us. He is not only declared to *have done no violence, neither to have had any deceit in his mouth*; so that his Sufferings could not be the Chastisement of his own Iniquity: But it is said more expressly—*Surely he hath borne our Grievs, and carried our Sorrows—He was wounded for our Transgressions, he was bruised for our Iniquities; the Chastisement of our Peace was upon him, and with his Stripes we are healed—the Lord hath laid on him the Iniquity of us all—for the Transgression of my People was he stricken—if thou shalt make his Soul (or if his Soul shall make) an offering for Sin.*

Isaiah
liii. 10.
Ver. 4.
Ver. 5.
Ver. 6.
Ver. 7.

THESE last words do very plainly refer to the *Mosaick* Institutions, which among the several Sacrifices prescribed under that Discipline, have provided one sort, which is peculiarly stiled an *Offering* or *Sacrifice for Sin*¹. In the same Sense therefore as they made Atonement by a typical Relation, we are to understand him in the strictest and most proper sense, to have made *his Soul*,^m or himself, *an Offering for Sin*. And then by parity of Reason, the other Clauses will be understood with the same View and Design, as importing him to have suffer'd in the stead of sinful Men, in order to procure their Impunity, and entitle them to Peace and Happiness. There are still some Remains of this Exposition in the Fragments of the *Jewish* Glossesⁿ, which plainly understood this Passage of some Person substituted in the room of others, to sustain the Punishment which they deserved, and procure them Ease and Satisfaction. And tho' the modern *Jews* have absurdly enough endeavour'd to apply this to some or other of the Worthies of the Old Testament, yet it is sufficient to our purpose to observe at present, that they are forced to admit a kind of *Expiation* to be design'd in some of the Clauses of this Prophecy; and after this we may well leave their Application of them, to sink under the weight of its own Absurdity. Could it be said of *Josiah* or *Jeremy*, that their Sufferings made Atonement for the Sins of the People, and averted the Punishment due to them, when they not only left them still exposed to greater

¹ It is not very easy to distinguish between *QUN* (which is the word here used) and *QUN*. But they were both understood to be more strictly expiatory, than either *Holocausts* or *Peace Offerings*.

^m The reasonable Soul answer'd, by a fit Analogy, to the Blood of the legal Victims, in which the Life consisted: And therefore it is emphatically express'd, ver. 12. *he hath poured out his Soul unto Death*. See Sermon XXIV.

ⁿ Vid. Allheo & Jalcut, in L'Empereur.

greater Miseries in their outward State, but mark'd out as the Objects of divine Vengeance from the unusual Guilt of complicated Wickedness? But upon the *Christian* Scheme, the whole Passage is most evidently applicable to the Sufferings of our Redeemer, who gave himself to die as a propitiatory Sacrifice for the Sins of Mankind, that all those who receive and submit to him by Faith, may have the Guilt of them obliterated, so as to be rescued at present from the Power or Dominion of them, and hereafter from their Punishment.

Berriman.
Sermon
XIII.

BUT there is one considerable Objection lies against the *Christian* Scheme, in this particular; and that is, that St. *Matthew* himself seems to have interpreted this Text of *Isaiah* after another manner. For tho' he applies it to the Person of *Christ*, yet it is upon occasion of his miraculous Cures perform'd upon Demoniacs, and such as were troubled with other Illnesses—that it might be fulfill'd (says the Evangelist) which was spoken by *Esaias* the Prophet, saying, *Himself took our Infirmities, and bare our Sickneses*. From whence it may be argued, that the Prophet meant nothing else, but his taking away Diseases by healing them, and not his taking Punishment upon himself, or enduring it instead of others. But if we recollect in what variety of Phrase this matter is set forth, not only that *he bore our Grievs, and carried our Sorrows*, (which are the Clauses referr'd to by St. *Matthew*) but in stronger and more emphatical Expressions, that *he was wounded for our Transgressions, and bruised for our Iniquities*, that he made his Soul an Offering for Sin, and the Lord hath laid on him the Iniquity of us all, and with his Stripes we are healed: It will be impossible to explain all these Phrases of his healing of Diseases, or other miraculous Effects of his Power upon other Men. And therefore, as St. *Matthew* has quoted only a small Part of this Prophecy, so it is most reasonable to think he has express'd only a Part, and not the Whole of its Meaning. All the Miseries of Life, being the Consequence and Punishment of Sin, there is no doubt but *Christ*, who made a perfect Sacrifice and Atonement for Sin, had in that regard a Right and Power to remove them. His miraculous Cures therefore, consider'd as the Result of his Atonement, might be fairly deem'd a fulfilling of this Prediction of *Isaiah*, and more particularly of that Clause, which, in the form of the Expression, seems to be easily accommodated to that purpose. Accordingly they are pertinently join'd with the Remission of Sins, and perform'd as the Reward of Faith, either in the Patient himself, or in those Friends that offer'd him for Cure. And tho' this was previous in the order of Time to his suffering upon the Cross, yet it may be consider'd as posterior in the view of the Divine Counsels, in respect of which the Mercies of God were exhibited thro' *Christ* to former Ages, and he is said to be the *Lamb slain from the Foundation of the World*. There is one thing more to be observ'd in this Prediction, and that is,

Mat.
viii. 17.

Rev.
xiii. 8.

III. THIRDLY, That these Sufferings of *Christ* were to be previous to his State of Exaltation and Triumph. For tho' the State of Exaltation be first mention'd in the Prophecy, [*Behold my Servant shall deal prudently (or shall prosper) he shall be exalted, extolled, and be very high*] yet the next words shew us that his suffering State was to precede it in the order of Time, and the other was to follow as the Recompence and Reward of his Abasement. *As many were astonied at thee; (his Visage was so marred more than any Man, and his Form more than the Sons of Men.) So shall he sprinkle many Nations, the Kings shall shut their Mouths at him.*—Which implies that their Astonishment at his humble and dejected State, should be succeeded by a greater Astonishment at his Exaltation, and the Success of his Doctrine, when many Nations should become his Profelytes by Baptism, and Kings themselves keep silence before him. The thing is afterwards express'd in clearer and stronger Terms. *When his Soul shall make an Offering for Sin, i. e. when he shall have freely offer'd up himself, and (as it follows) poured out his Soul unto Death,*

Isaiah
lii. 13.

Isaiah
lii. 14.
Ver. 15.

---liii. 10.
Ver. 12.

698 The Sufferings of *Christ* previous to his Kingdom.

Berriman. *he shall see his Seed* (a long Succession of Disciples) *he shall prolong his Days,*
 Sermon *and the Pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his Hand. He shall see the*
 XIII. *Travail of his Soul,* (or rather, because of the Travail of his Soul, he shall see
 Ver. 12. *his ° Desire) and shall be satisfied—Therefore will I divide him a Portion*
 Ver. 11. *with the great, and he shall divide the Spoil with the strong: Because he hath*
poured out his Soul unto Death.

FROM all this, our blessed Saviour very reasonably argues in the Text, that *Christ* ought in the first Place to have suffered these things, and after that, to enter into his Glory. Nor is this the only Argument, however clear and substantial, whereon to ground so important a Doctrine of Religion. There are many other Passages, which might be produced, as typically representing, or prophetically foretelling, the Sufferings of the *Messiah*, of the same *Messiah*, who should be afterwards exalted to the greatest Glory. Accordingly we find by the Verse next after the Text, that our blessed Lord argued to the same purpose from other Passages of holy Writ, when *beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself.* These words have reference to the known Division of the Old Testament, among the *Jews*, into three general Parts; namely, the *Law* or five Books of *Moses*, the *Prophets*, and the *Hagiographia*, or holy Writings. And in every one of these our blessed Lord found matter to explain relating to himself, and particularly to the Sufferings he had lately undergone. It were easy to shew this in variety of Instances, but I content my self with having thus far insisted on that signal Prophecy of *Isaiah*, which the Writers of the New Testament apply to *Christ*, and the Patrons of Infidelity will in vain attempt to apply to any other.

I HAVE now gone thro' those Prophecies which I thought most material to be consider'd in the second Interval of Time, after the Call of *Abraham*; namely, that which reaches from the Erection of the *Jewish* Monarchy, in the House of *David*, to its Downfal in the *Babylonish* Captivity. And in treating of them, I am sensible how much I have anticipated a great Part of what might have been said, concerning the succeeding Period: There being many Predictions in the following Prophets, which have relation to the same Events; namely, to the Glories of *Christ's* regal Character, and also to his suffering Estate. But there are withal some farther Discoveries, to assure the punctual Completion of those great Promises, that it should be during the Continuance of the second Temple, and within such a precise Period of Time, and after the preaching of a certain Messenger to make all fit Preparations for the Introduction of so great a Saviour. These therefore, as proper Evidences of the Christian Scheme, and fixing it with the greatest Exactness, that could be requisite beforehand, will be made the Subject of some following Discourses.

Now to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, &c.

• See Bishop *Chandler's* Defence of Christianity.

SERMON

SERMON XIV.

Christ's coming before the second Destruction of the Temple.

Preached, *September* the 6th, 1731.

The First SERMON on this TEXT.

MATT. xxiv. 15.

When ye therefore shall see the Abomination of Desolation, spoken of by Daniel the Prophet, stand in the holy Place, (who so readeth, let him understand.)

IN treating of the ancient Prophecies, which have spoken of the *Christian* Berriman. Scheme, or the Doctrine of a *Messiah* to come, I took occasion * from St. Sermon XIV. *Matthew's* Partition in the conclusion of his Genealogy, to distinguish them into three Periods or Intervals of Time, proportionably to the great Alterations which happen'd in the *Hebrew* Polity, and the Variety from thence arising in the State of Prophecy. The first of these extends from the Call of *Abraham* to the Reign of *David*, whilst the *Hebrew* Commonwealth was in a State of Growth or Increase; during which time the *Messiah* was promised to come of the Posterity of *Abraham*, as a select Body of People, separate from other Nations, and more particularly of the Tribe of *Judah*, which had the Promise of being continued a Body Politick for that end and purpose. After the Erection of the Kingdom in the House of *David*, that royal Family was fixed for his Nativity, and then the Prophets are full in their Descriptions of the Peace and Splendor of his Reign, and the Extent of his Authority, tho' not without some Intermixture of the Contempt and Sufferings which he should go thro'. Both these Schemes of Prophecy have been already consider'd; and in treating of the second of them, I have anticipated a great Part of what might have been said, concerning the succeeding Period, which reaches from the Downfal of the *Jewish* Monarchy in the *Babylonish* Captivity, to the Birth and Advent of the promised *Messiah*; there being many Predictions within that Period, which have relation to the same Events; namely, to the Glories of *Christ's* regal Character, and also to his suffering Estate. But then as there was more than ordinary need, under that Loss and Diminution of the House of *David*, to raise the dejected Spirits of the *Jews* with Hopes of Restauration; so there are some Circumstances added by these latter Prophets, which do more punctually fix the Time for the coming of this great Deliverer: Namely,

* See Sermon V.

Berriman. Namely, that it should be before the second Destruction of the Temple, that it should be within such a precise Number of Years, and after the Preaching of a certain Messenger, to make all fit Preparations for the Introduction of so great a Saviour.

Dan. THE two first of these Characters are pointed out in that Prophecy of *Daniel*, which our blessed Saviour refers to in the Text, not without a clear ix. 24--27. Intimation that it contains matter of great weight and importance, and such as they, whom God has endued with Capacity for that purpose, would do well to weigh and calculate with the greatest Accuracy and Exactness. For such I take to be the Import of this Parenthesis—*Whofo readeth, let him understand*—Let them who are conversant in Books, and capable of judging what is taught or intended by them, be careful to search into the Meaning of this Passage, and find out that great Event which is foretold by it. Tho' our Lord's immediate Design in this Discourse, was to warn his Disciples against those Tribulations they were shortly to expect, yet when he mentions upon this occasion that Prophecy of *Daniel*, which had foretold such Tribulations, he seasonably inserts this Admonition to consider the whole Compass and Extent of the Prediction, as a Point which might be greatly serviceable to confirm their Faith in him, by demonstrating his Right to that Title he assumed of the *Messiah*.

Now there being, as was said, two Characters in this Prophecy; the one, that this Tribulation should fall out after the Excision of *Messiah*, the other that his Excision should fall out within such a precise Period of time; it will be proper to state these two Characters distinctly, in order to perceive how the Knowledge of this great Doctrine was gradually increased.

Hag. IN stating the first of these Characters (which will be matter enough to ii. 6, &c. employ us in the present Discourse) I would take this Prophecy of *Daniel* in conjunction with that of *Haggai*, who foretels the shaking of all Nations, in order to introduce a great and glorious Alteration, when the DESIRE OF ALL NATIONS should come into their second Temple, and fill it with such Glory, as should exceed the boasted Glory of the former, which was raised by *Solomon*. The Prophecy of *Daniel* is in this Point less particular: For tho' it foretels an utter Overthrow and Devastation to succeed the Excision of *Messiah*, yet it is not so express, that there should be none before it, but this promised Deliverer should certainly appear whilst their second Temple was standing, and before it should be any more demolish'd by their Enemies. *Daniel's* Prediction was deliver'd just at the Expiration of the seventy Years of Captivity, before the Structure of the Temple was begun, or so much as projected; and suitably to the Views and Hopes of the People at that time, he promises a Restoration of their State and Polity: But lest they should rest in it as their greatest Happiness, he warns them that its Duration should be yet but temporary, that when the End of their Dispensation was accomplish'd, their City and the Sanctuary should then be subject to an utter Desolation. The latter Part of this Prediction does very clearly relate to the Conquest of some potent Enemy: and tho' some have endeavour'd to expound the Words of the Ravages and Profanation of *Antiochus*, yet there can be little doubt, but, if other Characters agree, this Part will also be most strictly applicable, to the final Overthrow and Destruction of *Jerusalem* by the Roman Army under *Titus*. I stay not now to descant on the particular Phrases or Expressions in this Part, because the Application of them will depend upon the fixing of the other Characters, which will be more properly consider'd in another Discourse.

BUT the Prophet *Haggai*, as was said, is more express and direct in fixing of the present Character, that there should be no more Overthrow or Destruction of the Sanctuary, before the coming of this promised Deliverer, who is promised to honour that Structure with his Presence, and fill it with greater Glory than that which the *Chaldeans* had destroy'd. This Prediction was occasion'd by the Slackness of the People, to improve the Licence which had been given by

by the Emperors of *Persia*, for the Rebuilding of the Temple, or rather by their Despair of finishing it in any manner answerable to its former Glory. The first had occasion'd a total Intermiſſion of the Work for many Years together: And when the Prophet had roused them from that Lethargy by his awakening Admonitions, yet still so little Hope did they conceive of Magnificence and Splendor, in the Fabrick they had begun, that if compared with the Temple in her first Glory, their present Prospect was in their Eyes as nothing. Hag. ii. 3. The Prophet, however, bids them go on with Courage, in full Assurance that God would take Care for the Glory of his House, and abundantly supply all that Defect of Glory, which they so much apprehend. *For thus saith the Lord of Hosts, (as we read in our Translation) yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the Heavens and the Earth, and the Sea and the dry Land: And I will shake all Nations, and the Desire of all Nations shall come, and I will fill this House with Glory, saith the Lord of Hosts. The Silver is mine, and the Gold is mine, saith the Lord of Hosts: The Glory of this later House shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of Hosts; and in this Place will I give Place, saith the Lord of Hosts.* Ver. 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9.

THIS some of the Jewish Interpreters would pretend to understand of that third Temple they expected to be built in the Days of the *Messiah*^a, when he shall lead them back into their own Land, and restore them to their ancient Privileges and Possessions. Which is not only inconsistent with the plain Design of the Prophecy, but likewise with the express Authority of their own ancient Doctors, as well as the concurrent Suffrage of many of the modern Rabbins. So that we have no need to dispute about their Notion of a future Temple, since it is sufficiently evident, that even altho' that be supposed, yet the Words of this Prophecy can no way be applied to it.

AND yet (which is much to be lamented) this Rabbinical Conceit has been but too rashly imitated by some Christians^b of great Name and Figure, who excluding the literal Interpretation of this Prophecy, would explain the Temple therein mention'd in a metaphorical and figurative Sense, to denote the Christian Dispensation, which is far superior to the Jewish, in like manner as the Christian Church is spoken of by other Prophets under the Notion of a spiritual Temple, and the Members of it are said in the New Testament, as lively Stones to be built up a spiritual House; and again, to be built upon the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner-stone, in whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy Temple in the Lord: In whom we also are built together for an Habitation of God through the Spirit. In the same Sense (I say) would some have us believe the Prophet speaks here of the future State of the Gospel, under the Metaphor of a Temple more glorious than the former, which answer'd to the Law. Now, whatever typical Reference of this kind might be allow'd, yet that it is secondary and subordinate, and that the material Fabrick, which was then erecting, must be literally understood, appears from the manifest Occasion and Terms of the Prediction it self.

THE occasion of it was (as I observ'd before) the small Hopes the People had of Magnificence and Splendor in the Fabrick they had begun, insomuch, that if compared with the Temple in her first Glory, their present Prospect was in their Eyes as nothing. The Prophet, however, bids them go on with Courage, because God would take Care for the Glory of his House, and provide indeed that the Glory of this later House, or the later Glory of this House, should be greater than the former, i. e. (says the Jew) that tho' the Building they were now about, inglorious as it was, should moreover be subject to many Profanations, and at last be utterly destroy'd, after which the People should themselves undergo a long and grievous Dispersion thro' the whole World; yet when

VOL. III.

(8 Q)

^a Vid. *Menass. Ben-Israel*, de termino vitæ, pag. 151.

^b D. August. de Civitate Dei, lib. 18. cap. 48. Cyril. Alexand. Glaphyra in Genes. lib. 2. pag. 56. item Arias Montanus in loc. & Hospinian. de orig. Templor. cap. 3. pag. 18.

Berriman.
Sermon
XIV.

the *Messiah* should appear, he should lead them back into their own Land, restore them to their ancient Rights, and rear them a more glorious Temple than they had before. No, says the *Christian*, this Matter must be spiritually understood, not to refer to any material Temple, but to mean the Constitution of the *Christian* Church, which is far superior to the *Jewish*, and is elsewhere spoken of in Scripture under the same Metaphor.

BUT where, I would fain know, where was the Encouragement to the *Jews* to proceed in their present Undertaking from either of these Arguments? Was it any Reason why this Temple should be built with Satisfaction, because that many Ages after it was destroy'd, another far more glorious should be rear'd up in its room? Or would they, who were griev'd at the mean Appearance of their Building, be encouraged to carry it on, by hearing that in Time to come, God would chuse himself a spiritual House not made with hands, and prefer it far to the most sumptuous Fabrick that could be prepared him? Surely, these Arguments have no such Tendency; they dissuade rather than excite; and confirm their mean Notions of the present Temple, rather than raise their Hopes of its future Glory and Magnificence. But the Design of the Prophet was manifestly otherwise: He bad them not be concern'd at the present mean Appearance of the Building, for that God in his due Time would fill that Building, which they judg'd so very contemptible, with *Glory* greater than *Solomon's* could boast of. This cannot surely, without great Absurdity, be restrain'd to any mystical, invisible, immaterial Temple, nor indeed to any material Temple yet to come; but must properly and literally belong to that Temple, which was then in hand. Against this, however, not to dissemble any thing, there are two Objections which should briefly be consider'd.

Object. 1. FIRST, It is objected both by *Jews* and *Christians*, Patrons of the Opinions abovementioned, that the Temple meant by the Prophet, is called *the later House*, by a word in the Original, which, they say, is never used to denote the last of two, but always of three things, or more.

Ans. I SHALL observe by and by, that the word *later* is not properly join'd by our Translators to the *House*, but belongs rather to the *Glory* of the House. But supposing our Translation were just, yet this Objection is grounded on a palpable Mistake; and so those *Jews* seem to have thought, who do allow the *second Temple* to be intended in this Place. Nay, and to that too the Prophet (if this Translation be right) has very clearly determin'd it, when he calls it expressly *THIS LATER HOUSE*, and not *THAT LAST HOUSE*, as the vulgar *Latin* Interpreter has inconveniently translated it. Where there is more than one, there may be certainly Priority of Order, and the Names of *former* and *later* may as justly be applied, where there are but two Temples, as they may be where there are two hundred. Again,

Object. 2. SECONDLY, It is objected likewise, that that which we suppose to be the *Glory* here foretold, did not fall out whilst that Temple stood, which *Zerubbabel* was now building, but after that Rebuilding of it by *Herod the Great*, of which *Josephus* gives an Account; and consequently that upon our own Principles we are bound to own, some future Temple was intended by the Prophet.

Ans. Now in answer to this it might be said, that some learned Men have entirely rejected this Account of *Herod's* Structure*, as a meer Fiction of *Josephus*, or at least concluded that *Herod* did only repair and beautify that which *Zerubbabel* had built. But I confess the Authority of that Historian weighs more with me, especially considering the Gospel it self seems to intimate the Temple in our Saviour's days, to have been much more glorious than that built by *Zerubbabel*. Nor can the *forty and six Years*, during which that Temple

Mark
xiii. 1, 2.

* Villalpand. in Ezech. tom. 2. par. 2. lib. 5. disp. 4. cap. 67. &c.

Temple is said to have been building^d be so easily explain'd of the Structure, *Berriman. Sermon XIV.* which was raised under the *Persian Empire*, as of this which was begun in the Reign of *Herod the Great*.

THE truth is, Men have fancied to themselves formidable Consequences of this Supposition of *Herod's* rebuilding the Temple, which have no real, but only an imaginary Foundation in this Prophecy of *Haggai*; and from thence have been led to fancy^e that it was renew'd only by Parts and Degrees, not pull'd down at once, and entirely rebuilt. Unnecessary Caution! For the *Jewish* Sanctuary was reckon'd to stand or continue, so long as it was not destroy'd or demolish'd by their Enemies. To repair, enlarge, beautify, or even to rebuild, was not consider'd as any Interruption or Discontinuance of it; and therefore the Temple thus rebuilt was not to be esteem'd another, but the same continued, only in greater Splendor. The Continuation of Worship, in the daily Sacrifice, prevented any need of a new Dedication of the Temple, which had been judg'd necessary, in a former Instance, to the same numerical Building, after the Impiety and Profanations of *Antiochus*^f. To this purpose 'tis remarkable that the *Jews*, who make no scruple to admit this Narrative of *Herod's* Building, yet never speak of it as a *third* Temple, but include that as well as *Zerubbabel's* under the Name of *בית שני* the *second House* or Temple^g; and whenever they make mention of *בית השלישי* the *third House*, they mean by it that future Temple, which they still expect to be built for them in the Days of the *Messiah*. Nay, and to put this Matter out of all question, it is farther observable, that *Josephus* himself, upon whose authority this account of *Herod's* Temple depends, had the same notion of the matter^h, and as he called that which was raised by *Solomon* *τὴν πρώτην ναὶον*, the *first Building* of the Temple, so he calls that *the last*, which *Haggai* began to build in the second Year of *Cyrus*. The Historian then, it seems, asserts that *Herod* did rebuild the Temple, and yet calls *Haggai's* or *Zerubbabel's* the *LAST*; and accordingly computes the Time, that the *LAST* Temple stood, not from its Rebuilding by *Herod*, but from that second Year of *Cyrus*. From whence 'tis manifest, that he did not look upon *Herod's*, tho' a new Building, as a *third* Temple. And what should forbid us to explain the Prophet *Haggai* in the same Sense, and understand him foretelling to his Countrymen, for their Encouragement, that their *Messiah* should appear in Person, to make them ample amends for the Absence of the *Shechinah*, and fill their Temple with *Glory* greater than ever *Solomon's* could boast of, before it should any more be, as it had lately been, demolish'd by their Enemies?

NAY, it may be added, (which has not generally been consider'd) that the Temple, thro' the whole Time of its Duration, from its first Erection by *Solomon*, to its final Destruction by the *Roman Army*, as it stood in the same Place, and was directed to the same Ends of the Levitical Worship, so it seems, in the Account of the Prophet, to be *one* and the same *House*. And accordingly

^d John ii. 20. *Forty and six Years was this Temple in building*, *καὶ ὅσοι χρόνοι ἦν ἐν οἰκοδομίᾳ* hath it been in building; for the Building was in hand at the very Time of this Discourse, and from hence it will be easy to reckon 46 Years backward, to that Part of *Herod's* Reign when it began. Vid. D. Chrysosth. hom. 23. in Joan. Hospinian. de orig. Templor. cap. 3. Bernard. Lamy comment. in harm. 4. Evangel. lib. 3. cap. 1. & Appar. Chronolog. par. 1. cap. 7. § 3. Nicol. Abram. Phaurus Vet. Test. lib. 12. cap. 14. Christian. Noldius in historia Idumæ, pag. 84. Herman. Witius Miscel. sacr. vol. 2. exercit. 11. § 49. See also Prideaux, Connect. of the Hist. of the O. and N. Test. ad annum ante Christum 17. vol. 2. book 9. pag. 480. folio. But we shall be deceiv'd, if we expect to find 46 Years of building in the *Persian Empire*, tho' some have endeavour'd at that way of Computation, as may be seen, in Perer. in Dan. lib. 10. pag. 529. & alibi. L'Empereur annot. ad Jachiad. in Dan. pag. 189, 190, 191. Reizius in not. ad Godwin. pag. 153, 154.

^e Vid. præter alios, Grot. de verit. Relig. Christian. lib. 5. § 14.

^f *Joseph Scaliger* supposes the Temple to be called the same, either from the Identity of Building, or from the Continuation of divine Worship: And therefore Mr. Selden's Objection from the Instance of *Antiochus* does not reach him; because then, tho' the Worship were discontinued, yet the Building was the same. Etiam si decies instauratum fuisset Templum a solutione captivitatis, tamen non decem sed unum Templum diceretur: Quia ἡ ἀνακατασκευὴ & continuatio sacrificii facit ut unum idemque habeatur. Nam dupliciter *בית שני* id est domus secunda intelligitur, & ratione structuræ, & ratione ἡ ἀνακατασκευὴ. Ubi est ἡ ἀνακατασκευὴ, ibi nulla est interruptio. Jos. Scalig. de Emend. temp. lib. 6. pag. 535.

^g Vid. Selden de Synedr. lib. 3. cap. 13. § 8.

^h De Bel. Jud. lib. 7. cap. 10. al. 27.

Berriman.
Sermon
XIV.

Accordingly the Opposition of *former* and *later* should not be applied to the *House* (as it is in our Translation) but rather to the *Glory* of the House. It should not be said—*the Glory of this later House, shall be greater than that of the former—but—the later Glory of this House, shall be greater than the former* [Glory.] This much seems to be reasonably collected from the Style of the Prophet at the 3d Verse—*Who is left among you, that saw THIS HOUSE in her first* (or former) *Glory? And how do you see IT now?* THIS HOUSE therefore is the *Jewish Temple*, whether built by *Solomon*, or by *Zerubbabel*: And if *Solomon's* Structure, tho' long since demolish'd, were included in that Character, what should hinder but that *Herod's*, in future Times to be erected, might be included in it too? So that the Prophet considers the Temple as one, but in different Estates, and Promises that this *later* Estate should be more glorious than the *former* had been. Let us see how this is found in fact.

SOME of the *Jews*, who do admit the second Temple, viz. that built after the Captivity, to be intended in this Prophecy, lest they should hereby be obliged farther to confess that the *Messiah* is already come, have studied to account for the *Glory* here foretold either from the Magnificence or Duration of the Building. As to the first of these, tho' they allow indeed that the Structure rear'd under the Conduct of *Zerubbabel* was inferior to that of *Solomon*, yet they boast of *Herod's* Temple as exceeding all the Buildings that had ever been before it. But alas! till they shall produce for this some better than their own Authority, Men far distant in time and bias'd to one side of the Question, we must desire to be excused, if we can give no credit to this improbable Assertion. The Riches and Splendor of King *Solomon* we well know, his absolute and independant Power and Authority, his great Credit and Interest with the neighbouring Princes, and the long and sumptuous Preparations which his Father *David* had made for his Building of the Temple. But which of all these Circumstances can agree to that little upstart King of *Jewry*, deputed only by the *Roman* Emperor, and limited therefore in his Power as well as his Revenue? Let their own Historian speak the Sense which the *Jews* at that Time had of this matter¹. They were unwilling (he tells us) that *Herod* should rebuild the Temple, lest he should never be able to finish it again. And tho' he did afterwards perform beyond their Expectation, and indeed beyond what *Zerubbabel* had done before him, yet it can never be imagined that he, of whose Abilities they (who must know much of his Circumstances) shew'd themselves so jealous, should be able to excel that magnificent and glorious Fabrick, which King *Solomon* had rear'd.

NEITHER, again, is the *Glory of this later House*, or the *later Glory of this House*, to be sought in its Duration. For altho' we should allow (as indeed very well we may) that there was a greater difference between them in this respect, than that trifling Space of ten Years, as the *Jews* compute it: Yet how mean a Notion must they have of Prophecy, who can imagine this to be the boasted *Glory* here foretold in such lofty and magnificent Expressions? For was this an Event worthy the *shaking of all Nations, the Heavens and the Earth, and the Sea, and the dry Land*, only that this Building might stand a few Years longer than the former? Was this that *Desire of all Nations* that was to come? Or could the *House* be said this way to be *fill'd with Glory*? Much less then could this make it preferable to the admirable Structure of King *Solomon*, or compensate for the Meanness of the Building and its Utensils, the many Profanations to which it was expos'd, and the Absence of some of the most distinguishing Privileges of the former Temple, according to the Accounts given of this Matter by the *Jews* themselves: As having now no more the sacred Fire to consume their Burnt-Offerings, no more the Oracle of *Urim* and *Thummim* in the Breast-plate of the Priest, no more the divine *Shechinah* between the *Cherubims*, nor the Ark of the Covenant in the most holy Place, those sacred Symbols of God's more immediate Presence.

THE

¹ Joseph. Ant. Jud. lib. 15. cap. 14.

THE Phrase of *FILLING this House with Glory*, has an especial reference to those ancient Phrases, whereby the *Glory of the Lord* is said to have filled the Tabernacle, or the Temple, when the divine *Shechinah* appear'd in a most eminent manner, and God descended in a Cloud. And now that ancient *Glory* was withdrawn, the *greater Glory* with which *this House* was to be fill'd, must be proportionably understood to consist in some other more sensible and conspicuous Appearance of the divine Majesty; and how should that be, but in the Advent of the promised *Messiah*? He therefore must be the Person here designed, under the Character of the *Desire of all Nations*, which suits well with those other Descriptions of him, that were given out from the beginning. When he was promised as the *Seed of the Woman*, bruising the Serpent's Head, it was intimated, that he should be the Deliverer and Rescuer of Mankind from the Tyranny and Usurpation of their common Enemy. And when he was afterwards promised as the *Seed of Abraham*, in whom *all Nations* should be blessed, there was then an express mention of the universal Benefit of his Redemption. When his Descent was limited to the Tribe of *Judah*, it was still foretold, that *to him* should the gathering of the People [or the Nations] be, their *Desire* or *Expectation*, as the Version of the LXX significantly renders it. And when it was yet more precisely limited to the Royal House of *David*, his Kingdom was represented to be universal, reaching even from Sea to Sea, and from the River unto the Ends of the Earth, that all People, Nations and Languages should serve him, whilst he was given for a Light to the Gentiles, and for Salvation unto the Ends of the Earth, to be an Ensign or Standard of the People, to which the Gentiles should seek, and all Nations should flow unto it. After all this, there can be little doubt but this Unity of Character should lead us to conclude, that the *Desire of all Nations* in this Prophecy, is a natural Description of the same illustrious Person, in whom *all Nations* were to have so great an Interest, that they could not but be supposed to desire and expect him earnestly, when they should come to have a distinct Knowledge, and clear Revelation of him.

THE *Jews* indeed, who understand this Prediction of the outward Ornaments of the Building and its Utensils, would confine this Phrase to denote the precious or desirable things of every Country, when all Lands should supply whatever they had valuable or ornamental, to beautify this place of the Sanctuary of God, and to make the place of his Feet glorious. And it cannot be denied, but by help of other words put in Construction with it, it may sometimes signify precious or valuable things of any kind, as being apt to create Delight and Satisfaction. But as we have seen, there was nothing in the Event to answer the Prediction so interpreted, no Magnificence or Splendor in the Fabrick, to exceed what had been seen in that of *Solomon*: so there is plainly no other word put in Construction with it, to lead us to such Interpretation; but the *Desire of all Nations* is simply mention'd, and remains to be explain'd from the Analogy of other Descriptions in the Old Testament.

WE have the word expressly used of that Affection with which the People are acted towards an intended King or Governor, even before they have any actual Knowledge of his Person. Such is the Import of *Samuel's* Speech to *Saul* at their first Interview: *On whom is all the Desire of Israel? is it not on thee, and on all thy Father's House?* And when *Jehoram*, by his ill Courses and ill Success, had lost this Affection of his People, it is said, that he departed (or went off) *without Desire; without being desired*, (says our Translation) without any such loyal or grateful Dispositions to his Memory. And how natural is it then to suppose, that the *Messiah*, who was to have an universal and most prosperous Empire over the whole World, should here be described under the Character of the *Desire of all Nations* (tho' not actually known to them) since all must needs wish for such Improvement as he only could and would give in.

VOL. III.

(8 R)

* As *כלי חמדה* Vessels of Desire, i. e. precious Vessels or Implements, 2 Chr. xxxii. 27. & xxxvi. 10. Jer. xxv. 34. Hof. xiii. 15. Nah. ii. 10. *ארץ חמדה* the Land of Desire, i. e. pleasant or delightful Land, Psal. cvi. 24. Jer. iii. 19. Zech. vii. 14. But it is to be observ'd that in these cases the word join'd with *חמדה* is put in *regiment*, whereas in the Text we are considering *חמדה* it self is in *regiment*, and there is great difference in the form of Expression between saying the *Desire of Nations*, and *Nations of Desire*.

Berriman.
Sermon
XIV.

Exod. xl.
34, 35.
1 Kings

viii. 11.
2 Chron.
v. 14. &
vii. 1, 2.

Ezek.
xliii. 5. &
xliv. 4.

Gen.
iii. 15

Gen.
xxii. 18.

πεσδολια
ταυ ιδων
Gen.

xlix. 10.
Psal
lxxii. 8.

Dan.
vii. 14.
Isaiah

xlix. 6.
Isaiah
xi. 10.

Isaiah
ii. 2.
Mic. iv. 2.

1 Sam.
ix. 20.

2 Chron.
xxi. 20.

Berriman. Sermon XIV. due time; in like manner, as *the earnest Expectation of the Creature*, (or Heaven then World) is elsewhere said to *wait for the Manifestation of the Sons of God*. So justly might he be mentioned, by this Prophet, for the Object of *Desire* to all Nations, as well as to the Jews by *Malachi*, where his coming to his Temple is again predicted. *The Lord whom ye SEEK* (says he) *shall suddenly come to his Temple, even the Messenger of the Covenant whom ye DELIGHT IN, saith the Lord of Hosts*: which many of the ¹ Jews understand of the *Messiah* in Person, and *Abarbanel* ^m admits the former Clause to mean the *Schechinah*, or divine Glory which was then wanting, tho' he would unnaturally confine the other to the King of *Persia*.

Rom. viii. 19.
Mal. iii. 1.

THE Privilege which is here promised at his coming, as the great Ground of such Delight and Expectation, is the same upon which the other Prophets have frequently insisted, and which in a former Discourse I had occasion to explain, as a main Characteristick of the Days of the *Messiah*; namely, that *Peace* and *Tranquillity*, and flourishing Estate, which is foretold as the great Advantage of his Government.—*And in this Place will I give Peace, saith the Lord of Hosts.*

Heb. xii. 27.

Isaiah lxvi. 22.

So great a Change was not to be effected without much Agitation and Commotion: But the State then introduced, being to be stable and perpetual, it is added, that this Commotion should be yet but *once*—*Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the Heavens and the Earth, and the Sea, and the dry Land. And I will shake all Nations, and the Desire of all Nations shall come, &c.* From whence the Apostle to the Hebrews very rationally argues for the Perpetuity of the Gospel-State. *And this word* (says he) *yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain*: i. e. it argues this to be the last Concussion, and consequently shews that what was now introduced must be stable and perfect, as being to be changed no more. Which is what the Prophet *Isaiah* had foretold yet more expressly;—*the new Heavens and the new Earth which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the Lord.* Wherefore very rationally proceeds the same Author to the Hebrews, to call the *Christian Dispensation a Kingdom which cannot be moved.*

ALL this the Prophet *Haggai* foretels should be accomplish'd within the Time of the continuance of the second Temple; as it was in those general Commotions of the World which preceded the Erection of the *Roman Empire*, and in the ensuing Publication of the Gospel-Scheme. And after such Accomplishment the Prophet *Daniel* has foretold, that the *Jewish State* and Polity should then be overturn'd, the City and Temple of *Jerusalem* entirely demolish'd. The *Roman Army*, laying all about them waste and desolate, and putting an end to the *Mosaick Services*, without leaving so much as *one Stone* of the Temple to lie upon another, was emphatically that *Abomination of Desolation* spoken of by *Daniel the Prophet, standing in the holy Place*: Which, since it could not come, before the *Desire of all Nations* had appeared, and was soon to follow him, does bear a signal Testimony to the Truth of the *Christian Religion*, giving proof at once that the *Messiah* is already come, and that the Time for his coming is the same in which our *Jesus* did actually appear.

BUT tho' this be a Character from whence the coming of *Christ* may be demonstratively argued *ex post facto*, since those Events have happen'd, which were not to fall out till after his appearing; yet it does not so directly Point out the Circumstance of his appearing, as to give ground for fixing on any one Person, if there should be different Pretenders, or for naming beforehand the precise Article of Time in which he should appear. This therefore is added by the Prophet *Daniel*, that *seventy Weeks* were determined for this purpose, sixty nine of which were to pass, before the *Messiah* entred on his Office, and in the last, he should confirm his Covenant, and be cut off in the midst of it himself. But so express and celebrated a Prediction will deserve to be stated in a Discourse by itself.

¹ Vid. R. D. Kimchi, Comment. ad loc.

^m Apud Pocock, in loc.

SERMON XV.

CHRIST's coming in the Fourth Monarchy, and within
Seventy Weeks.

Preached, *October* the 4th, 1731.

The Second SERMON on this TEXT.

MATT. xxiv. 15.

*When ye therefore shall see the Abomination of Desolation, spoken of
by Daniel the Prophet, stand in the holy Place, (who so readeth, let
him understand.)*

IT has already been observ'd how the shocking Dispensations of the *Babylonish* Captivity, and Downfal of the Family of *David*, had an immediate Recompence in a great Addition to the Light of Prophecy, and more punctual Predictions of the Reign and Advent of *Messiah*. These were observ'd to consist chiefly in three Particulars, viz. (1.) That it should be before the Destruction of the second Temple. (2.) That it should be within such a precise number of Years. And, (3.) After the Preaching of a certain Messenger, to make all fit Preparations for the Introduction of so great a Saviour. The two first of these are pointed out in that Prophecy of *Daniel*, which our Saviour refers to in the Text. But in regard the former Character is still more expressly contain'd in the Prophecy of *Haggai*, I chose to insist more fully upon that, and made it the principal Subject of my last Discourse. What we meet with in *Daniel* to the same purpose, may be farther explain'd when we proceed to the next Character of the *Messiah's* coming, that it should be within such a precise number of Years.

THERE are two Methods made use of by this Prophet, for settling the Time of the *Messiah*, the one more general and comprehensive, the other more precise and determined. By the first, I mean that Description, which is given in a twofold Prophecy (namely, in *Nebuchadnezzar's* Dream of the *Image*, and in the Prophet's Vision of the *Beasts*) of four successive *Kingdoms* with which the Church of God should be concern'd; under the last of which another *Kingdom* should be erected by the *God of Heaven*; which, tho' it might be suppress'd and diminish'd for a while, yet in the End should subdue all Power to it self, and endure throughout all Ages. Some of these Particulars are further explain'd or confirm'd in other Parts of *Daniel*. And whoever shall attentively compare these Passages with the Histories of following times, will find such evident Characters of the *Chaldean*, *Persian*, *Grecian*, and *Roman* Kingdoms, and of the *Christian* Dispensation commencing

Berriman.
Sermon
XV.

Dan.
ii. 31. &c.
— vii. 3.
&c.

Dan.
viii. 3. &c.
— xi. 2.
&c.

Berriman.
Sermon
XV.

men- cing under this last, and putting a final Period to all, that he will not fail to conclude, that a Prediction so punctual in its Circumstances, and so exactly fulfilled in the Event of Things, is a most weighty Argument for the Truth of our Religion, a Demonstration, from Experience of what is past, for the Truth of what is still expected.

NOR indeed do the Adversaries of Christianity themselves by any means appear insensible of the Moment and Conclusiveness of this Argument: Which has made them so solicitous of late to depreciate the Credit of this Prophecy, by bringing down *Daniel* to a lower Age^m, when a great part of what is here mention'd as future, had actually occur'd, and some popular Expectations were begun of that *Messiah*, of whom (as these Novelists pretend) the more ancient *Jews* were ignorant. They have indeed the Concurrence of some of our own Expositors for applying those Passages, which we usually understand of the Conquest of the *Romans*, to the earlier Desolation and Outrage of *Antiochus*. But so long as *Antiochus* himself is confess'd posterior to this Prophet, the Authority of the Prediction will be incontestable, and the Dispute about Interpretation may be more easily adjusted. And since the Attempts to bring the Prophet lower, have been lately baffled by an eminent and learned^a Prelate; who has at the same time demonstrated the fourth Kingdom to be the *Roman*, and consequently later than *Antiochus*; I conceive it will be needless to add any thing on that Subject, till our Adversaries shall have thought of something to offer in reply.

UPON this foot then the Prophecy of the *four Kingdoms* will stand as an invincible Argument on the side of Christianity, pointing out the Erection of the *Christian Church* during the last of them, which should continue to the end of Times, and triumph over all its Adversaries and Oppressors.

BUT tho' this Prediction will fix the coming of *Christ* to the Days of the *Roman Empire*, there is yet another in the same Prophet which does more directly point out the Period of Time in which he should appear, and after which the Holy City should undergo its last and final Desolation, to endure till that consummation of Ages, to which the glorious Restoration of *Israel* is refer'd, and their Incorporation into one body with the Faithful gather'd out of all Nations.

It was upon the Point of the Expiration of the Seventy Years of Captivity at *Babylon*, that *Daniel*, recollecting the Promise made by *Jeremy*, applied himself by humble Prayer to God, that he would not defer the fulfilling of that Promise, but cause his face to shine upon his Sanctuary, and his City which was called by his Name. The God that heareth prayer, was not unmindful of his humble Request, but, while he was yet speaking, sent the Angel *Gabriel*, not only to assure him of the intended Restoration, but withal to open farther in what Age the *Messiah* was at last to be expected, and what Miseries should then befall the *Jews* for their rejecting him. For so his Words are read in our Translation, — Seventy Weeks are determined upon thy People, and upon thy Holy City, to finish the Transgression, and to make an end of Sins, and to make Reconciliation for Iniquity, and to bring in everlasting Righteousness, and to seal up the Vision and Prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the Commandment to restore and to build *Jerusalem*, unto the *Messiah* the Prince shall be seven Weeks; and threescore and two Weeks the Street shall be built again, and the Wall, even in troublous Times. And after threescore and two Weeks shall *Messiah* be cut off, but not for himself: and the People of the Prince that shall come, shall destroy the City, and the Sanctuary, and the End thereof shall be with a Flood, and unto the End of the War, Desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the Covenant with many for one Week: and in the midst of the Week he shall cause the Sacrifice and the Oblation to

^m Scheme of Lit. Proph. Chap. v. § 6, 7, 8.

^p Bishop Chandler's Vindication of his Defence of Christianity, Vol. I.

to cease, and for the overspreading of Abominations he shall make it desolate, even *Berriman.*
until the Consummation, and that determin'd shall be pour'd upon the Desolate. *Sermon*
XV.

THE Person who is here described under the joint Title of *Messiah the Prince*, at the 25th Verse, and under each of those Titles separately in the Verse following, I take to be no other than that great Deliverer, whose Office and Character had been gradually unfolded by the former Prophets. The *Nagid*, *Isa. lv. 4.* the *Prince*, Leader or chief Ruler, is a Title by which the Prophet *Isaiah* had formerly described him. And the Author of the Book of *Chronicles*, who *1 Chron. v. 2.* wrote after the time of *Daniel*, has spoken of him under the same Character, with a plain Reference to *Jacob's* Benediction, which engages for the Continuation of the *Jewish* Polity till this *Nagid* should appear. And then for the other Title of *Messiah*, or the *Anointed*, tho' it be elsewhere applied to other eminent Persons, upon account of their *Unction* or Designation to some high Office, and to set them forth as Types of that more eminent One to come; yet being used (as it is here) emphatically and by way of Distinction, it can reasonably be referr'd to none, but that more eminent one himself, whom the *Jews* from that time appear to have expected under no Character so much as that of *Messiah* or the *Christ*. This, I take it, must be grounded on the Prophecy which we are now considering, there being no other Passage in the Old Testament, where that Title is specially and singly attributed to him, excepting one Place in the *Psalms*, which seems to be of later Date, and therefore to use or apply the word in Imitation of this Prophecy of *Daniel*. Besides, the Things which are here foretold of this *Messiah Nagid*, that he should be *cut off*, and that the *Jews* should be no more his *People*, but another *People* be surrogated in their Room, called here the *Nagid's People that shall come*^a, or his future *People*, are no other than what we find mentioned by other Prophets, with respect to the Son of *David*, as may be collected from what I have already offer'd in some former Discourses.

NOR are they who contend for any other Interpretation, either agreed with one another, or consistent with themselves in the fixing of this Character. Sometimes it is allowed that *Messiah the Prince*^b, in the 25th Verse, is some extraordinary anointed Person, and yet it is insisted that the *Messiah* to be *cut off*, in the next Verse, is not the Character of any singular Person, but attributed to the Temple and Priesthood, which is said to be *cut off*, *i. e.* broke, or interrupted by the Profanation of *Antiochus*. What else is this, but to be enslaved to an Hypothesis? to vary the Meaning of a Word, (as it were) in the same Breath, without Ground or Authority! At other times it is allow'd that singular Persons were intended in both Verses; but that they are different Persons, neither living in the same Age or Country. *Messiah the Prince* shall be *Cyrus* or *Zerubbabel*, or *Jeshua* the High-Priest. *Messiah* to be *cut off* shall be *Agrippa minor*, the last of the *Jewish* Kings. And the *Nagid* or *Prince* mentioned afterwards shall be *Titus* at the head of the *Roman* Army marching up to the Destruction of *Jerusalem*. In this last indeed they have the Concurrence of some good Expositors, who differ from them in the other Characters. Nor shall I stay to dispute that with them, being content at present to observe, that it is plainly impossible by any Computation of these Weeks to point out *Cyrus* or *Zerubbabel*, and that *Agrippa* could not possibly be the *Messiah cut off*, because he really survived the Sacking of *Jerusalem*, and enjoy'd the Favour and Protection of the *Romans*.

VOL. III.

(8 S)

MEAN-

^a The two Phrases *וְאֵין לוֹ* and *וְעַם נָגִיד הָכָּה* have been very differently understood by Expositors. But if we take the *Nagid* here to be the same Person as in the Verse before (which seems most easy and natural) and explain this Passage by other Prophecies, which speak of the Rejection of the *Jews*, and the Calling of the *Gentiles*, it will then appear reasonable to supply the word *עַם* in the first Clause, and make *הָכָה* in the last refer rather to *עַם* than to *נָגִיד*; from whence this Sense will arise, that the *Jews* should not be his *People*, but the *Romans* or *Gentiles* should come to be the *People of the Nagid*. See *Mede's Works*, Book III. pag. 704, 705.

^b Sir John Marsham.

^c Manasse Ben-Israel.

Berriman.
Sermon
XV.

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Daniel
xi. 31.
1 Macc.
i. 54.

MEAN while I do gladly accept of this Concession made by the *Jews* and *Judaizers*, that the Desolation here foretold was that effected by the *Roman* Army, and not the Profanation of *Antiochus*. And thus much indeed may be necessarily collected from the Terms of the Prediction. For however the *Abomination of Desolation*, or the *Wing of Abominations making desolate*, may be reasonably understood of an Army of Idolaters, with the Images of their Idols painted on their Colours, and is accordingly by this Prophet, in another Chapter, as well as by the Author of the Book of *Maccabees*, applied to the Army of *Antiochus*; yet in the Text before us, it must be understood of some greater and more lasting Desolation, than that which continued but three Years and an half, and then neither demolish'd the City nor Temple, nor drove out the Inhabitants; it must be understood of such a *Desolation* as should endure *until the Consummation, and that determined, shall be poured upon the Desolate*, or Desolators. And what other should this be, but the Desolation of the *Roman* Army, which has lasted now for well nigh 1700 Years; and therefore we may reasonably suppose will last on to that Time of *Consummation*, when the Calling of the *Gentiles* shall be full and compleat, the Enemies of the Church shall be destroy'd, and the *Jews* shall be receiv'd again into God's Grace and Favour.

OUR blessed Saviour, in speaking of it here as future, [*When ye SHALL see the Abomination, &c.*] has taught us, that it was not then understood to have been compleated in the Days of *Antiochus*. Had it been so understood, his Auditors had easily objected to the Ground of his Discourse. But whilst they allow'd it to be future, this was beforehand a Presumption in his Favour, and the Event afterwards falling out so exactly agreeable to his Prediction, affords a very strong and insuperable Argument for the Truth of his Interpretation. Accordingly St. *Luke*, in representing this Discourse of our Lord, has more clearly express'd the Matter to our purpose, paraphrasing (as it were) the words of *Daniel* — *When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with Armies* [mark here *Daniel's* Wing, or overspreading of *Abominations*] *then know that the Desolation thereof is nigh* — *And they shall fall by the Edge of the Sword, and shall be led away captive into all Nations; and Jerusalem shall be troden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.* And what now are these but the Prophet's Times of *Consummation*?

Luke xxi.
20.

Ver. 24.

Isaiah
liii. 11.

Isaiah.
liii. 10.

Isaiah
lxi. 1.
Luke
iv. 18.

ALL these are such Characters as do strongly argue for the *Christian* Exposition: And yet to these it may be added, that the Benefits here promised are such as do clearly point out the Offices of the *Messiah*, and cannot be with any Propriety ascribed to any one besides. Whom else may we expect but the *Lord our Righteousness*, who is at the same time that *righteous Servant* that is to *justify many*, and to *bear their Iniquities*? I say, whom else may we expect to *finish the Transgression*, and to *make an end of Sins*, by *making Reconciliation for Iniquity*, and *bringing in everlasting Righteousness*? Who else should *cause the Sacrifice and the Oblation to cease*, that there should be no more occasion for the ritual Service of the Law; but he who *made himself an Offering for Sin*, and so perform'd that Expiation in Verity, which the legal Expiations could but faintly shadow out? Who^d else can be supposed to *seal up Vision and Prophecy*, but that illustrious Person, who is the principal Subject of the Prophetick Writings, and in whose coming therefore they would be sure to find their Accomplishment? Lastly, who is that *Most Holy* here said to be *anointed*, but the same who in the Verses following is emphatically stiled the *Messiah* or *Anointed*, and whom the Prophets have described as being *anointed of the Lord, to preach the Gospel, or good Tidings unto the meek*.

THIS last Clause indeed the *Jews* contend should be understood of a material *Unction*, and that not of a Person, but a Place, viz. the inmost Sanctuary, which used to be distinguish'd by the same Title of *Holy of Holies*, or the *most Holy*.

^d See Sermon XX.

^e Vid. Wagens. Tela ign. Satan. in Mantiff. p. 638.

Holy. In which, I think, they are less unreasonable than a Countryman of ours ^f, *Berriman. Sermon XV.* who contends for the Application of the same Character to the whole Temple and Priesthood, which never were distinguish'd by that Name, as being dedicated anew, after the three Years Profanation of *Antiochus*. But then because the want of the holy anointing Oil is reckon'd by the *Jews* among the Defects and *Defiderata* of the second Temple, to avoid this Difficulty, they understand the *Sanctuary* here to be *anointed*, to belong to that third Temple, which they expect hereafter in the Days of the *Messiah*. In answer to which I need only reply at present, that as it will be impossible for them to fix on any Computation of Time, which will suit with that Hypothesis, so it is plainly nothing else but the desperate Refuge of a bad Cause, and which would draw with it this most terrible Consequence, that there is yet another Desolation and Captivity to be expected, subsequent to the Building of that other Temple, and which must endure *till the Consummation*.

I SHALL just add, that our Notion of this Prophecy will not be at all weaken'd, if we should here follow the Opinion of some *Christian* Expositors, that as the *Holy of Holies* was the real Title of the *Jewish* Sanctuary, so it may here be taken typically, either for Heaven it self ^g, which our High Priest is entred into, and has prepared for us, which answers to *Moses's* consecrating the typical Sanctuary with Oil: Or else for the *Christian* Church ^h, which *Christ* ^{Exod. xxx. 26.} has anointed, *i. e.* consecrated in the room of the *Jewish*, by his Blood has purchased, and by his Grace directs. But however these Opinions be both pious and probable, yet in regard that that illustrious Person, who is the general Subject of all the Prophets, has in the Verses following the Title of *Messiah*, I would choose to explain this Phrase by an Allusion to the same Character, as speaking of the *Unction* of that *most Holy One*.

BEING convinced then by all these Considerations, that this most signal Prophecy of *Daniel*, refers to the Time of *Christ's* coming or appearance in the Flesh, it remains that we examine a little briefly into the Period of Time prefixed or determined for this great Occurrence. And this the Angel has described by *seventy Weeks*:—*Seventy Weeks are determined upon thy People, and upon thy holy City*. A Course of seven Days, which brought on the ordinary Return of the Sabbath, is usually reckon'd for a *Week*, and from its first Institution among the People of God, has been drawn into Practice by other Nations. But besides this short Revolution of Days, the *Jews* had a proportionable Revolution of Years prescribed in their Law, from whence every seventh Year was esteem'd a *Sabbath*, and the whole seven together would be fairly entitled to the Name of a *Week*; of which also there may seem to be some Footsteps in profane Authors ⁱ. The former of these, which is the vulgar *Week*, can never suit the Computation of this Prophecy. The Events foretold are too great and important, nor is there any thing in History to answer them, within that short Pittance of Time, which would be supposed by such Interpretation. And therefore Expositors, with one Consent, have allowed the other sort of Weeks to be intended in this Place; which is both agreeable to the Prophetick Stile, in which it is usual to count a Day for a Year, and seems to be intimated by the Prophet *Daniel* himself, when speaking of the vulgar Week, he terms it a *Week of Days*, as it were on purpose to ^{Dan. x. 2.} distinguish it from the other *Week of Years* in the foregoing Chapter.—Now seventy Weeks, or seventy Times seven Years, amount in the whole to 490 Years; or if you chuse, according to a learned Writer ^k upon this Subject, to reduce them to *Jubilees*, there may be one Year added for every *Jubilee*, *i. e.* ten in all, which will bring the Computation to 500 Years.

THESE

^f Sir John Marsham, Chron. can. pag. 571.

^g Jun. & Tremel.

^h Constant. L'Empereur in Annot. ad Jachiad. in Dan. pag. 187, 188.

ⁱ Duodecimam Annorum Hebdomadam, Aul. Gell. Noct. Att. lib. 3. cap. 10.

^k Mr. Lancaster's Chronological Essay.

Berriman.
Sermon
XV.

THESE Weeks now were to be computed from the going forth of the Commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, i. e. from the Promulgation of some royal Edict¹ to grant Leave for the return of the Jews, and the Rebuilding of their City. But as there were four different Edicts of the Kings of Persia, which concern'd this Restauration of the Jews, the first by Cyrus, the second by Darius, and two more by Artaxerxes, it has been lately controverted among learned Men, which of these should be the *Epocha* of Daniel's Weeks, from whence we are to reckon to the Time of the *Messiah*. Again, as there was more than one Emperor of the same Name among the Persians, it has likewise been a Matter of doubt, what Darius might be meant in the sacred History, whether *Hystaspis* or *Nothus*, and what Artaxerxes, whether *Longimanus* or *Mnemon*. Moreover, as this Computation is not made by Years, but by Weeks or Sabbaths of Years^m, it may also be question'd, whether they should take Rise immediately from the Promulgation of such Edict, or rather be postponed till the Observation of *Sabbatic* Years was duly restored, and from thence computed to the Term of their Completion. Farther, as the Angel in *Daniel* has divided his Period into the distinct Intervals of seven Weeks, sixty two, and one, it has been likewise question'd, whether he means they should be all number'd in one continued and immediate Succession, or whether it might not be equitable to suppose an Omission for some Years between those several Intervals. Once more, as to the Conclusion of the Weeks, it may also be disputed, whether they should terminate in the Birth or Ministry, or Excision of the *Messiah*, or be so extended, as to take into the last Weeks, the Overthrow and Demolition of Jerusalem.

THESE are such Difficulties as may reasonably create some Variety of Opinion, and lead the Men of Learning and Enquiry into different Schemes of Computation. And as it would be a Matter of too great length, to enquire into the Merit of these Controversies, which have been fully debated already by very able Pens; so I think the main of the Argument would not be greatly affected by the Issue of such Enquiry, so long as we are allowed, what has been shewn before, that the coming of *Messiah* was meant to be pointed out by this Period. For whatever be determined about those other Questions, thus much is certain, that the Date of this Prophecy must long since have expired, that more than two thousand Years have pass'd since the Commencement of it, and that the Term of its Completion would fall much about that Age of the World, which the Gospel History assigns to the Life and Sufferings of Jesus: That the Excision of *Messiah* should be follow'd by the final Desolation of Jerusalem, and if both did not fall within the seventy Weeks, yet neither could be long after them.

I KNOW not what Credit may be given to Grotius's^a Report of one Rabbi *Nebumias* declaring, about fifty Years before our Saviour, that the Time prefix'd by Daniel for his coming, could not possibly be deferr'd longer than fifty Years. But it appears evidently from the Books of the New Testament, from Josephus and the Pagan Historians themselves, that the Jews about that Time, and from thence to the sacking of the City, expected his coming with the greatest Impatience. In the utmost Distresses of the Siege, they look'd for him to prevent the Miseries which threatned them^o, and derived their Courage under those Extremities principally from the Promises which had been made of his appearing before the final Overthrow and Dissolution of their Government. But when they saw the sad *Catastrophe*, without finding their Expectations answer'd, they appear to have been left in the darkest Doubt and Hesitation, they became an easy Prey to the Cunning of Imposters, and their celebrated

¹ So צא דבר is used Esth. i. 19. and the word דבר is elsewhere put for a Royal Edict. ² Chron. xxx. 5. — xxxi. 5.

^m See Mr. Lancaster.

ⁿ Grot. de Veritat. lib. 5. § 14.

^o Menasse Ben-Israel de Term. Vit. pag. 175.

celebrated *Akiba* himself ^p, not able to resist the bold Pretensions of *Barchochab*, fell, with many others of his Countrymen, into most fatal Errors; and whilst he blindly discredited the true *Messiah*, found it necessary to Embrace a false one. With what an Air of Desperation was that Complaint ^a made anciently among them, that all the Characters of Time were compleated, and yet the *Son of David* was not come! And if of late they have refused to abide by the old Interpretation of their Prophecies, they do yet in effect but give up their Cause, and confess the Time to be expired for his Advent, when they pronounce a solemn Curse ^r on those who shall presume upon a Calculation: destroying hereby the very End of such Predictions, and giving just Reason to suspect that their present Belief is not consistent with those ancient Promises upon which it should be founded. For to what End should God acquaint his People with this Time of their Salvation, but for their Use and Benefit, to teach them to rejoice in the Continuance of their outward Privileges, and ardently aspire after those more glorious and spiritual ones to be enjoy'd under him, to expose the Folly of all vain Impostors, and point out more directly the real Object of their Hopes and Expectations? And should they then neglect to improve his Mercy to this gracious End? Should they not advance their Hopes, as that Time drew nearer on, and believe in him as their promised *Messiah*, in whose Advent (without any Rival) it was finally compleated?

If then upon the best Calculation we can make, we find the Time to be expired (and that, I judge, will appear whatever Scheme we take) from hence we are to collect, that the Promise is fulfill'd, that the *Messiah* has surely made his Appearance upon Earth, and answer'd what was written of him by the ancient Prophets. If he was *rejected and despised of Men*, yet the Fault was entirely their own; God was not therefore slack concerning his Promise, because they were ungrateful, and despised the Benefit.

'Tis but a weak Evasion which the *Jews* have to offer us in this particular, that their Sins are the occasion of this Delay, and that the *Messiah* had undoubtedly long since appear'd, had they but been in fit Posture and Disposition to receive him. The Promises of his coming have manifestly no such Limitation to confine them. The Period of Time was *precisely determin'd* in the Angel's Phrase; and the Wickedness of the People was so far from being counted a Lett or Impediment to his appearing, that the Prophets have most clearly foretold the Vices of that Age in which he should appear, and the vile Indignities they should not stick to offer to their Lord and Saviour. *Abarbanel* ^t, who states this Notion of a conditional Advent of *Messiah*, is very little consistent with himself, when he admits, that tho' this Condition of Repentance be not fulfilled, yet he must come at the necessary and appointed Time.

THIS shews withal the Weakness of another Pretence, to which the *Jews* have recourse, to extricate themselves out of these Difficulties, *viz.* that the *Messiah* ^u did really come within the Time appointed, but hid and conceal'd himself from an unworthy People. For he was not only to come in the Flesh, but to execute his Office; and tho' he might not be own'd and acknowledg'd by a sinful Nation, yet he was so far to appear and manifest himself among them, as might expose him to that Contempt and Indignity which the Prophets had foretold. He was not only to *come*, but to be *cut off*; he was to

V O L. III.

(8 T)

make

^p Vid. Othonis Hist. Doctor. Misnicor. pag. 109.

^a Vid. Cocceii Considerat. Respons. & Quæst. Jud. pag. 222.

^r Cocceius ut supr. pag. 332. אמרו חכמים תפח רוחם של מהשני הקצים Maim. Hal. Melac. cap. 12. § 2.

^t Abarb. de cap. fid. cap. 14. vid. & Vorstii Annot. *ibid.*

^u Munster de Messia, quoted by Dr. Jenkins, *Reasonbl. of the Christian Religion*, par. 1. chap. 12. And that may be the Meaning of the *Jerusalem Gemarists* in *Lightfoot*, Chorogr. cap. 51. that the *Messiah* was born at Bethlehem before their Times.

Berriman.
Sermon
XV.

make Reconciliation for Iniquity, and to bring in everlasting Righteousness. He was both to have his Enemies and his Adherents; to suffer from the former for a little Time, and come off at last with Triumph and Glory: Which shews again the Weakness of another *Jewish* Pretence, that their State at present is neither good enough, nor bad enough for his appearing, which must be in a Generation, either altogether Sinful, or altogether Righteous ^u.

THERE can be then no room to doubt, but *when the Fulness of Time was come*, he shew'd himself faithful who had promised, by punctually sending forth his Son to take upon him human Flesh, to submit to the Discipline, and fulfil the End of the *Mosaick* Law, for the Salvation of such as stedfastly expected him.

^u Abarb. de cap. fidei, cap. 14. Non veniet Filius *David*, nisi ad Generationem, cujus omnes vel sunt puri, vel impuri.

SERMON XVI.

The Promise of *Elias* fulfill'd in St. *John Baptist*.

Preached, *November* the 1st, 1731.

MAT T. xi. 14.

And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come.

AFTER having open'd to you, in several Discourses, the gradual Berriman. Sermon XVI. Manifestation and Discovery of the Gospel-Scheme, which was made through the several Ages and Periods of Time, and shewn how it was originally contain'd in the Promise made to our first Parents in Paradise, and farther explain'd more and more, as the Time for its Accomplishment drew nearer on; the Application of all this will be so easy and natural to the Doctrine and History of *Jesus*, that as it can be hardly necessary for me in this Place to point out their Agreement more distinctly, so I hope I may have leave to conclude, that our Religion does receive an abundant Confirmation from the Predictions of the Old Testament, or that those Characters both of Time and Office, by which the Prophets, have described the Redeemer of Mankind, were eminently fulfill'd and accomplish'd in *Jesus*.

BUT forasmuch as there is Notice likewise, in some of the Prophets, of a certain Forerunner or Harbinger to go before him, it may be expected, as a farther Note of the *Messiah*, or at least to prevent an Objection against *Jesus* being He, that we should fix upon some Person answering that Character; since the *Messiah* could neither be before his Forerunner, nor be long after him. That Forerunner is foretold by the Prophet *Isaiab*, under the Character of *the Voice of one crying in the Wilderness, Prepare ye the Way of the Lord*: And by the Prophet *Malachi*, he is termed the *Messenger before the Face of the Lord*; and is yet more expressly distinguish'd by the Name of *Elijah the Prophet*, to be sent before the great and dreadful Day of the Lord*. Now all these Characters, with what else relates to the Office or Work he had to do, are in the New Testament applied to *John the Baptist*, who to be sure came into the World before *Jesus*, being born six Months before him, prepared Men for his Doctrine by the Preaching of Repentance, pointed him out as the *Lamb of God*, and went before him in his Sufferings. But to set this Matter in a better Light, it will be proper to consider more distinctly,

I. WHAT Grounds there were for the Expectation of *Elijah* to come.

II. WHAT

* There is yet another Text, Mic. ii. 13. where some *Jews* have understood *Elias* to be meant under the Character of *הפרץ* the Breaker, and *Messiah* under that of *מלכ* their King. But as this is more obscure, I chuse to omit it. See *Pocock* in Mic.

Berriman.
Sermon
XVI.

II. WHAT was the Office or Business to be perform'd by him. And,
III. How this was accordingly fulfill'd in *John the Baptist*.

Isaiah
xl. 3, 4, 5.

I. FIRST, As to the Grounds of such Expectation; there are three Passages more especially in the Old Testament, which intimate some Harbinger of the *Messiah*, design'd to introduce him, or prepare for his Reception. The first is that of the Prophet *Isaiah*, which the *Baptist* has applied to himself: *The Voice of him that crieth in the Wilderneys, (i. e. a Preacher faithfully delivering the Word of God, in such a desert and uncultivated Place, as fitly represents a People barren and unfruitful in good Works: Delivering to wit this Message following) Prepare ye the Way of the Lord, make straight in the Desert a high Way for our God; every Valley shall be exalted, and every Mountain and Hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough Places plain; and the Glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all Flesh shall see it together: For the Mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.* This Passage very clearly alludes to the Preparation that is usual to be made, by mending of the Ways, for the Progress or Entry of great Princes. And that the Prince here intended, is no other than the *Messiah*, that great Prince or Potentate, who is the general Subject of all the Prophets, may appear from these Words, *the Glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all Flesh shall see it together.* It is well known that *the Glory of the Lord*, is the Character given of that bright Appearance, which was the most signal Manifestation of the divine Presence in the ancient Sanctuary. And when, in Reference to that, there is a *greater Glory* foretold in future Times, to be manifested to the *Gentiles*, or to *all Flesh*, it can point out nothing else but those glorious Days of the *Messiah*, which do elsewhere use to be drawn out under the like stupendous Characters. The *Messiah* therefore is that *Jehovah*, that *Lord*, whose *Way* is here to be prepared, and before whom a *Voice*, or Preacher, was to be sent out on that Commission.

Mark
i. 2. 3.
Mal. iii. 1.

THIS is the natural and obvious Account of that Prediction of *Isaiah*: Or if there be any doubt remaining, it may be clear'd from another of *Malachi*, which St. *Mark* has coupled with it in the Entrance of his Gospel, that they may stand together, as fitly explanatory of one another. *Behold, I will send my Messenger, and he shall prepare the Way before me (or the Way of my Face, which the Jews^b acknowledge for a Character of the Messiah) and the Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his Temple, even the Messenger of the Covenant whom ye delight in, behold he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts.* That this Messenger to be sent must be the same with the *Voice* in the foregoing Prophecy, is easily collected from the Design or Office of both,—to prepare the *Way of the Lord*. And that the *Lord* whose *Way* should be prepared, could here be no other than the *Messiah*, may be reasonably gather'd from those Characters of their seeking and delighting in him, and his coming suddenly to his Temple. Which, from what has been suggested in some former Discourses, may appear to belong to the same great Deliverer, whose coming they so eagerly expected, whom the Prophet *Haggai* describes as the *Desire of all Nations*, who should come to fill the second Temple with Glory, and after whose coming the Prophet *Daniel* foretels, that that Temple, with the holy City, should be utterly demolish'd.

ACCORDINGLY some of the best of the *Jewish* Expositors do admit this to be a Prediction of the coming of *Messiah*^c, and they who contend for its relating to the Restoration of the *Shechinah*, do in effect advance the same Notion; since the Defect of that *Glory* of the former Temple was promised, we have seen, to be compensated by the Manifestation of *greater Glory* in the Advent of the promised *Messiah*. Whom then do they suppose to be this Messenger, sent

^b But upon this Remark I lay the less stress, because the Person is varied in the New Testament—before thy Face.

^c Vid. *Porock* in loc.

sent before his *Face*? Some would have that to be the Prophet ^d *Malachi*, ^{Berriman.} whose Name is the same word in *Hebrew*, that we here translate *my Messenger*: ^{Sermon XVI.} and who, being the last of the *Jewish* Prophets, and consequently nearest to the times of *Messiah*, is therefore said to go *before his Face*. But as the distance was too great for him to be esteem'd a special Harbinger, nor was any thing done by him to answer that Character, I conceive there need be nothing added to confute it. Others understand it of *Messiah* the Son of *Joseph* ^e, whom they expect to come before the Son of *David*, and be slain in War. But as that Notion of a double *Messiah* has already been exploded ^f, they must appear to have interpreted the Passage with greatest Reason, who understand this *Messenger* to be the same Person, who is distinguish'd by the Name of *Elijah* in the Chapter following, where we have the last Description of this Harbinger. *Behold, I will send you Elijah the Prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful Day of the Lord; and he shall turn the Heart of the Fathers to the Children, and the Heart of the Children to their Fathers, lest I come and smite the Earth with a Curse.* ^{Mal. iv. 5, 6.}

THAT coming of *Messiah*, which brings Joy and Gladness to such as look for his Salvation, will nevertheless be *dreadful* and terrible to his Opposers, especially as 'tis open'd by the Prophet *Daniel*, and more fully in the Gospel it self, to include his second coming to judge the World in Righteousness, and render to every Man according to his Works. Now as these two Advents are for the most Part not distinguish'd in the Old Testament, but the whole Oeconomy of the *Messiah*, is spoken of as one entire State of Things, it can be little wonder if that same Harbinger, who is elsewhere promised to go *before the Lord* whom they sought and delighted in, should here be reckon'd to precede the great and dreadful Day of the Lord.

HE has here the Character of *Elijah the Prophet*, alluding without doubt to the *Tishbite* of that Name, who in the Reign of *Abab* had endeavour'd the Reformation of *Israel* from *Baalitical* Idolatry. Accordingly the LXX have here translated it *Elijah the Tishbite* ^g; and from the History of the New Testament, as well as other Evidences, it appears to have been a common Opinion of the ancient *Jews*, that that very Prophet should return in Person, in order to anoint *Messiah* to his Office, and manifest him to the People. From whence the *Christian* Fathers, observing the Distinction between the first and second Advent of *Christ*, have deferr'd the personal coming of *Elijah* to this last, in order to usher in the Day of Judgment and final Consummation. But to say the truth, there is no necessary Consequence in this way of arguing. The Allusion of a Name may be easily supposed without Identity of Person: And, as we have seen ^h already that *Christ* is sometimes promised under the Name of *David*, without designing to intimate that King *David* should return in Person, and sustain the Office of *Messiah*; so some of the *Jews* have had the Candour to allow the same with respect to this Promise of *Elijah* for his Harbinger. *Maimonides* ⁱ confesses, that this and other things of like Nature, will not be clearly understood before they are fulfill'd, that what the Prophets have said concerning them is obscure, nor have the wise Men any Tradition about them, beyond what is necessarily gather'd from the Words of Scripture. This is repeated after him by Rabbi *Tanchum* ^k, who, tho' he represents the other as the Opinion of many, yet seems himself rather to incline to what he states as the Judgment of *Maimonides*, that it should not be *Elijah* himself, but some great Prophet like him in degree, and called by that Name for his declaring the Knowledge and Name of

VOL. III.

(8 U)

of

^a Abarb. apud Pocock.

^b Ἡλίας τὸν τισβίτην.

^c Aben-Ezra, apud Pocock.

^d See Sermon IX.

^e See Sermon XIII.

כל אלו הרברים וכיוצא בהן לא ידע אדם איך יתו ער שיחיו הרברים סחומין חן אצל הנביאים גם החכמים אין להם קבלה וגו' Maimon. Halac. Melachim. c. 12. § 2.

^f Apud Pocock Not. Misc. ad port. Mosi, c. 6. p. 219. Annot. in loc.

718 The Promise of *Elias* fulfill'd in St. *John Baptist*.

Berriman.
Sermon
XVI.

Luke
i. 17.

of God¹. And a more modern *Rabbi*^m of great Note and Learning, insists upon this only as certain, that there must come however some Forerunner, to incline and create better Dispositions in the Minds of Men. So that the Allusion, couch'd under the Name of *Elijah*, may import no more than his Resemblance of that Prophet in the manner of his Life, and in the Tendency of his Doctrine, that he should come (as the Angel *Gabriel* explains it in the New Testament) *in the Spirit and Power of Elias*. And this leads us,

II. SECONDLY, to consider, in the next Place, what was the Office or Business to be perform'd by him. And this is chiefly reducible to two Heads; namely, (1.) to notify and point out the *Messiah*. And, (2.) to instruct the People, or incline them with fit Dispositions to receive him.

As to the Notification of the *Messiah* in the first Place, that is implied in the Texts above-mentioned, under the Phrases of *preparing his Way*, and being *sent before him*, as it were to give notice of his coming, to inaugurate him in his Office, and usher him in with greater Decorum and Solemnity. This is the Purport of that Tradition, which is mention'd by *Trypho*ⁿ the Jew in *Justin Martyr*, that they all expected *Elias* to anoint the *Messiah* at his coming, and make him manifest to all the People. And this therefore seems to be the Character which R. *Akiba* assumed to himself, when he took upon him to anoint *Barchochab* to the Office of *Messiah*. After a long Silence or Interruption of the Order of Prophets, it was suitable to the Dignity of the *Messiah's* Character that one more than a Prophet should be sent before him, to signify the Approach of so august and long-expected a Deliverer. When he design'd to visit and adorn the Temple with his glorious Presence, it was fit that some one should give Notice of his coming, to accomplish the ritual Worship of that holy Place, and declare him to be the Person that had all along been figured out by the legal Expiations. Lastly, since the End of his coming was confessedly twofold, as well to take Vengeance on his Enemies, as to effect the Salvation of his chosen People, it was proper likewise that this great and dreadful Day of the Lord should be duly notified, that he was coming with his Fan in his Hand, and would thoroughly purge his Floor, gathering the Wheat into his Garner, but burning up the Chaff with Fire unquenchable. By such Notices as these, he would not only point out the Person, and declare the Offices of the *Messiah*, but at the same time he would instruct the People with what Sentiments and Dispositions to receive him.

Mat.
iii. 12.

Isaiah
xl. 4.

Psalms
xxv. 9.

2 Cor.
x. 5.

Mat.
xi. 29.

THAT is express'd by the Prophet *Isaiah* under the figurative Expressions of every Valley being exalted, and every Mountain and Hill being made low, the crooked being made straight, and the rough Places plain. Where, under the Allusion of mending or levelling the Roads for the Progress or Entry of great Princes, that Alteration is suggested, which should be made in the Minds and Dispositions of Men, in order to qualify them to receive the Benefit of such Salvation. The Roughness of their Tempers, and Crookedness of their Wills, should be rectified and made straight, in order to bring them to that meek and humble Spirit, which God has promised to guide in Judgment, and instruct in his way. They should be raised out of those Valleys of Sin, and Depths of Impurity, which could not but obstruct the Efficacy of divine Grace, and hinder their aspiring to those heavenly Joys proposed by this compassionate Redeemer. And withal, their lofty Conceits of national Privilege or personal Merit should be humbled and brought low, with all vain Imaginations, and every high thing that exalted it self against the Knowledge of God, before they could submit to his Discipline or learn of him, who is meek and lowly in Heart. This is yet more

¹ He adds the Fiction of *Messiah Ben-Joseph*: but no such thing appears in *Maimonides*.

^m *Menasseh Ben-Israel*, de Resur. l. 3. c. 7. §. 3. p. 313. Quidquid sit veniet PRÆCURSOR ALIQUIS, qui Animos Hominum flectat, ac probe disponat, ne Terra Anathemate percipiatur.

ⁿ Οὐδε ἔχει δύναμιν τίνα μίχεται ἀν ἐλθὼν Ἡλίας χεῖρην αὐτῶν, καὶ φανερὸν πᾶσι ποιήσει. *Just. Martyr*. 174. Ed. 1593. καὶ ὅς πάντες ἡμεῖς καὶ χεῖρην ἀνθρώπων καὶ ἀνθρώπων προσδοκῶμεν γινώσκειν, καὶ τὸν Ἡλίαν χεῖρην αὐτῶν ἐλθόντα, p. 207, 208.

more fully express'd by the Prophet *Malachi*;—*he shall turn the Heart of the Fathers to the Children, and the Heart of the Children to their Fathers.* The word used by the LXX, and authorized by our blessed Saviour's Quotation in the Gospel, is *ἀποκαταστήσει*, *He shall restore*; and as it properly imports the Regulation of such Matters as were confused and disorder'd, (in which Sense it is sometimes applied to the future coming and righteous Judgment of *Christ*) so here it is reasonably understood to denote ° the correcting of that Prepossession of Judgment and Perverseness of Will, into which the People of the *Jews* had generally fallen, and bringing them back to just Principles of Faith, and the Practice of Obedience. So the Son of *Syrach*, alluding to this Passage of *Malachi*, and applying it to *Elias the Tishbite*, agreeably to the Persuasion that prevail'd among the *Jews* at that Time, proposes him to be look'd for as the means of working such a Change in *Israel*, as might help to preserve them from the Severity of the divine Vengeance:—*Who wast ordained (says he) for Reproofs in their Times* (or, as some would have it, a Type for the Times to come) *to pacify the Wrath of the Lord's Judgment, before it brake forth into Fury, and to turn the Heart of the Father unto the Son, and to restore the Tribes of Jacob.* And yet more clearly has the Angel, in the Gospel, explain'd this Passage of the Tendency and Efficacy of his Doctrine:—*Many of the Children of Israel shall be turn to the Lord their God. And he shall go before him in the Spirit and Power of Elias, to turn the Hearts of the Fathers to the Children, and the disobedient to the Wisdom of the just, to make ready a People prepared for the Lord.*

Berriman.
Sermon
XVI.

Mal. iv. 6.
Mat.
xvii. 11.
Acts iii. 21.

Ecclesi.
xlviii. 10.

Luke
i. 16, 17.

SUCH then is the Character, and such the Office of the *Messiah's* Harbinger. It remains to be enquired, in the

III. THIRD and last Place, how this was accordingly fulfill'd in *John the Baptist*. That he could not be *Elijah* the *Tishbite* brought back from Paradise, with the same Body that had ascended in a Whirlwind, we have an unexceptionable Argument from the clear History the Gospel gives of *John's* Conception and Nativity. And that the Soul of *Elijah* was not made by Transmigration to actuate a new Body, must be granted by those who allow him to be still preserv'd alive in Paradise, and never to have undergone that Separation of Soul and Body, which we call *Death*. But yet, that he was that *Elias which was for to come*, the very same *Elijah* whom the Prophet *Malachi* foretold, our blessed Saviour has taught us in the Text. And as we have seen already, that the Name of one Person is sometimes applied to another who resembles him, and that the *Jews* themselves do not always insist upon it that the *Tishbite* in Person should go before *Messiah*; so it will not be difficult upon enquiry to observe such Lines of Resemblance between him and the *Baptist*, as may justify such Application of his Name, and shew *John* to be *Elias* in the Sense and Meaning of the Angel, *i. e.* one coming in the Spirit and Power of *Elias*.

THE Austerity and Reservedness of his Life, was one considerable Argument of such Resemblance. But the Tendency and Purport of his Doctrine, the Opposition which he made to prevailing Prejudices and Corruptions, did at once answer to the Character of *Elijah*, who so zealously endeavour'd the Reformation of the People from *Baalitical* Idolatry, and likewise to those Predictions which have been produced of the *Messiah's* Harbinger, and the Nature of his Office, to regulate such things as were irregular, and correct the perverse Wills and Dispositions of Men. If we look but slightly into the History of his Life, we cannot fail observing, how he approved himself a Preacher of Righteousness, when, standing in fear of no Man's Person, he freely rebuked *Herod* himself, told the ostentatious *Pharisees* their own, and display'd the

° For the fuller Exposition of this Passage, and particularly of the Hebrew Particle *by* as importing with: — the Fathers with the Children, and the Children with the Fathers, *i. e.* great and small, one with another: See *Pocock* on the Place.

† Mede Disc. 25. pag. 98.

Berriman. the Vanity of those Privileges and that Righteousness, of which they made
 Sermon such proud Boasting. They valued themselves for being descended of the Stock
 XVI. of *Abraham*, they thought God's Favour on that score their Birthright,
 Mat. iii. 9. and due to them by Inheritance. But the *Baptist* had them *not think to*
say within themselves that they had *Abraham* to their *Father*, not reckon
 themselves secured by this outward Privilege, for that *God* could *raise up*
 better *Sons to Abraham*, who should imitate the Faith and Obedience of their
 Father, whilst they, whose Behaviour was unworthy of their Privilege, should
 be punish'd with a final Rejection.

Mat. AGAIN, they had used to satisfy themselves with the meer Shell and Out-
 side of Religion, with a superficial and perfunctory Observance of ritual In-
 stitutions, whether such as were prescribed by the written Law of *Moses*, or
 annex'd and superadded to them by their own oral Traditions. These, whilst
 they observ'd with a nice and most scrupulous Exactness, they were yet very
 Mat. careless and indifferent in Matters of far greater Importance; they omitted the
 xxiii. 23. weightier Matters of the Law, Judgment, Mercy and Faith. In opposition
 Mat. iii. hereunto the *Baptist* warn'd them, that they should *bring forth Fruits meet*
 8. *for Repentance*, that they should bring themselves to such a thorough Change
 and Renovation of Mind, as would exert it self in correspondent Acts, give a
 new turn to the whole Man, and make their Obedience universal, without
 Limitation or Reserve.

Mat. WHEN he had thus obviated the reigning Prejudices of the Times, he had
 iii. 11, 12. an easy way prepared to encourage their Belief in the *Messiah* as a Person
 Acts quickly *coming after* him, to assure them that his *Kingdom* was then near *at*
 xix. 4. *hand*, by his Baptism (as it were) to anoint him to his Office, and directly
 John i. 29. point out to him as *the Lamb of God, which taketh away the Sin of the World*.
 But withal he let them know, that his coming, which gave such Satisfaction
 to them who did rejoice in his Salvation, would yet, according to the Prophet
Malachi, be *great and terrible* to them who improved not by his Influence;
 when he should come, not only in Mercy to save his faithful Servants, but in
 Vengeance to consume his Enemies, to *gather his Wheat into the Garner, and*
burn up the Chaff with Fire unquenchable.

IT is not to be denied indeed, but the former Prophets too, as well as St.
John Baptist, did in some sort *prepare the Way of Christ*, both by directing the
 People to believe in him, and teaching the Necessity of Repentance and inward
 Piety. But there are some special Circumstances, in which he had much the
 advantage of them in this respect as *Christ's* Forerunner, and appears more
 eminently so than they. For (as a late eminent Author ^a states the difference
 between them) "none of them did or could Preach these things in the same
 "Manner with the *Baptist*. They did not so boldly, or so plainly warn the
 "People, how vain those Confidences were, by which they flatter'd themselves
 "in being the holy Seed, descended of the Stock of *Abraham*. They did not
 "so clearly discover to them, that the Venom of the Viper still lurk'd even in
 "those, who were highly exalted with a false Opinion of their own Sanctity,
 "built upon a nice Observance of the *Mosaical* Ordinances. They did not
 "draw the Scene like him, and set before their Eyes that *unquenchable Fire*,
 "prepared for ungodly Men and vain-glorious Hypocrites. But above all,
 "they did not, could not, press the Necessity of Repentance, and the Danger
 "of delaying it, by that most quickening of all Motives, the *Kingdom of*
 "Heaven being then *at hand*. Consequently they could least of all be said,
 "like him, to *go before the Face of the Lord*; the Difference between them and
 "John being in this respect the same, as that of Messengers sent long before,
 "to give Notice of the intended, but yet distant coming, and that of Officers
 "attending to accompany the Motions, and immediately to usher in the Per-
 "son of the Prince."

^a Dr. Stanhope on St. *John Baptist's* Day.

The Promise of *Elias* fulfill'd in St. *John Baptist*. 721

So far we have seen how the *Baptist*, by his Preaching and Ministry, did fulfil the Character, and answer the ancient Predictions of *Messiah's* Harbinger. But there are two obvious Objections to be made against it, which it concerns me very briefly to remove. It may in the first Place be objected, that the *Baptist* himself did expressly disclaim this Character, when the *Jews* sent *Priests and Levites* to ask him, whether he were *Elias*, and he said, *I am not*. But the Answer to this will easily appear from that settled Opinion which prevail'd among the *Jews*, that the *Tishbite* of that Name should appear in Person, the very same that had Prophesied anciently in the Reign of *Abab*. So that in Reference to this Conceit, the *Baptist* might answer very truly, that he was not that *Elijah* whom they meant and expected, altho' he was nevertheless that *Prophet Elijah* design'd by *Malachi*, i. e. one fitly resembling that ancient Prophet, by coming in the Spirit and Power of *Elias*. And that he was so in reality he did not obscurely declare, when at the same Time he applied to himself that other Character occurring in *Isaiab*, which has been shewn already to respect the same illustrious Forerunner. *I am* (says he to those very Messengers who came to put the Question, *I am*) *the Voice of one crying in the Wilderness, Make straight the Way of the Lord, as said the Prophet Esaias*. Berriman. Sermon XVI. John i. 21. —i. 23.

It may farther be objected, that St. *John* did not fulfil those Predictions of *Elias*, which have already been recited; that his Preaching had no such Efficacy as those Passages had promised; that he was so far from regulating what was out of order, from restoring all Things (in the Language of the LXX) from turning the Hearts of the Fathers to the Children, and the disobedient to the Wisdom of the just, that on the contrary the *Jews* seem to have been generally harden'd against the Purport of his Doctrine, vehemently attached to their inveterate Prejudices, insomuch as to persist in an obstinate Rejection and Disbelief of that Person, whom he is said to introduce. But the Answer to this will lie in few Words,—that the Purport of the *Baptist's* Doctrine was plainly agreeable to that which the ancient Scriptures had foretold of the *Messiah's Harbinger*;—that the Success of it was in some measure answerable, as appears from the great multitudes of common People, as well as of *Publicans* and *Soldiers*, and some even of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* themselves, that submitted to the penitential Discipline of his Baptism, and learnt of him to believe in him that should come after him;—that, finally, there were no grounds to expect that the Success of his Ministry should be universal and without exception, since in this Case there had been no room for that severe Denunciation of the Prophet, that this *Day of the Lord* shall be great and terrible, to burn up as an Oven all that do wickedly; i. e. such as shall continue in an obstinate Estate, and will not be reclaim'd. So that it will be reasonable here to take the Angel's Exposition: *MANY of the Children of Israel shall be turn to the Lord their God*. Acts xix. 4. Mal. iv. 1, 5. Luke i. 16.

I THINK this may suffice for the Solution of this Difficulty, against *Jews* and *Infidels*. But as we are taught in the Gospel to expect a second coming of *Christ*, which is more emphatically stiled the Times of Restitution of all Things: What if we should suppose, with the concurring Suffrage of Antiquity, that there shall also be a second coming of his Harbinger, when this Part of his Office shall more eminently be fulfilled, in the restoring of all Things to their proper order, and making ready a People prepared for the Lord? If in this View we cannot argue from it, as being fully accomplished; yet the Time being still future, will prevent its being urged against us in the way of an Objection: Since no one can complain of a Prediction being unfulfill'd, when the Character of Time is not expired, that was fixed for its Completion. But I am loth to insist upon a Point which may be disputable, when I think there is enough to be alledg'd of what is clear and evident, to give us Satisfaction.

Now to God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, be all Honour and Glory, &c.

VOL. III.

(8 X)

SERMON

See Mede Disc. 25.

SERMON XVII.

The Antithesis between the LAW and the GOSPEL,
stated and explained.

Preached, *January* the 3d, 1731-2.

The First SERMON on this TEXT.

JOHN i. 17.

*For the Law was given by Moses, but Grace and Truth came by
Jesus Christ.*

Berriman.
Sermon
XVII.

IN stating the Evidences of the Gospel Scheme, as they were gradually open'd and unfolded to those Ages of the World, which were previous to the coming of *Christ*, I had occasion to make mention of the *Law* of *Moses*, as a standing Prophecy or Notification of his Office and Character. And if it be admitted, which was shewn in many Instances, that the Nation of the *Jews* was figurative of the *Christian* Church, in future times to be gathered out of all Nations, and consequently that the more remarkable of God's Dealings and Dispensations towards them were meant as Types or Tokens of his future acting thro' *Christ*; there can be little doubt, but the Dispensation of the *Law*, among the rest, should be referr'd to the same stupendous Oeconomy, and design'd as well to foreshew and point out, as to make some present Application to faithful Men of the Discipline and Benefits of the *Messiah*. But because this is a matter of great Moment and Concern, and which adds the greatest Lustre and Beauty to the Writings of the Old Testament, at the same time that it confirms and bears witness to the New; it cannot but deserve our very serious Attention, whilst I proceed to state it distinctly and at large. And in order to treat this Subject with the greatest Ease and Dispatch, I shall digest what I have to say upon it under three Heads.

- I. I SHALL explain that *Antithesis*, which is stated in the Text, between the *Law* of *Moses*, and the *Grace* or Gospel of *Christ*.
- II. I SHALL shew, by clear and convincing Arguments, that the *Mosaick Law* was not design'd to have an universal or perpetual Obligation; but serv'd as a preparatory Discipline to lead Men to the Gospel, and was to terminate in the Days of the *Messiah*.
- III. I SHALL point out and explain how it serv'd this Purpose by its Types and Prefigurations, which foreshew'd the Office and Character of the *Messiah*, and made such Application of his Benefits, as was suited to that Age

Age of the World, and proportion'd to the Faith and Sincerity of its Ob-
servers.

Berriman.
Sermon
XVII.

I. In explaining that *Antithesis*, which is stated in the Text, between the *Law* of *Moses*, and the *Grace* or Gospel of *Christ*, we may begin with observing it to lie in three Particulars; viz.

1. IN the Titles or Characters of both; the one is term'd the *Law*, the other is described to be *Grace and Truth*.
2. IN the Method or Manner of their Dispensation: the one is said to be *given*, the other to *come*, or be *effected*. And,
3. In the different Authors or Promulgers of them: the one was *given by Moses*; the other *came*, or was effected by *Jesus Christ*.

I. FIRST let us attend to the Titles or Characters of both: the one is term'd the *Law*, the other is described to be *Grace and Truth*.

By the *Law* then we understand that System or Body of Precepts, which was given to the People of *Israel*, after their coming out of *Egypt*, prescribing in the several Parts and Offices of Life, whether publick or private, civil or religious, what was required either to be done or avoided by them. Now as the Precepts, contain'd in this Law, are manifestly of different Kinds, and enforced from very different Considerations; so we find it pleased God to distinguish them by different Appellations, the *Commandments* or *Testimonies*, the *Statutes* and the *Judgments*; pointing as it were the way to treat of them in distinct Classes, and range them in a threefold Division. Agreeably to this, it has been usual with considering Men, to treat of the *Law* of *Moses* under three Heads, the *Moral*, the *Ceremonial*, and the *Judicial* or *Forensick*.

Deut. vi.
1, 20.

By the *Moral Law* we are used to understand those Precepts which are founded in known Principles of Nature, and reach not only the outward Manners and Behaviour, but the whole Nature of Man, in his Understanding, Will and Affections, in every Faculty and every Power. And though this Law differs only in the Method of Promulgation from the Dictates of right Reason, suggested by the Nature and Relations of Things; yet considering the Corruption and Degeneracy of Mankind, by which the Reasonings of Men were exceedingly perplex'd, and the Light of Nature in a manner extinguish'd, it was no slight advantage to the chosen People of God, that their Duty in these Matters, and the Sanctions to enforce it, were set before them anew by Revelation, and that in more legible and clearer Characters than any Reasonings of their own could have suggested.

THE *Ceremonial Law*, again, is that which prescribes the Rites and Ceremonies of religious Worship, and some of a more private Nature correspondent to them. And among these, though some might be calculated for the preserving of outward Order and Decency, yet I trust it will appear to be the main Drift and Design of them to foreshew or figure out some future Benefits, and by distant Types and Adumbrations to point out the very same Truths, which should afterwards be more explicitly unfolded by *Messiah* himself.

AND as thus the *Ceremonial Law* appears to be a sort of Appendix to the *Moral*, in respect of the first Table of the *Decalogue*, or the Duty which Men owe to God; so it is easy to observe that the *Forensick*, *Judicial*, or *Political Law*, was calculated for the Enforcement of both Tables, but more particularly of the latter, or the Duty which Men owe to one another. This therefore concerns the Constitution of Government, and the settling of Property, the publick Administration of Justice, and the ordering of private Life, the proportioning of Penalties to several Offences, whether against such Laws as were common to the Race of Mankind, or such as were peculiar to their own Establishment.

As

Berriman.
Sermon
XVII.

As the whole System was deliver'd by *Moses* only to the Nation of the *Hebrews*, who were bound to observe them all without exception, he has not particularly digested them under these Heads; but has so intermix'd and compounded them together, as to pass from one to the other interchangeably, and we may sometimes observe one and the same Law to partake of every kind, so as to have something in it that is *moral*, *ceremonial*, and *political*.

HOWEVER, the *Jews* may from hence be led to look upon the whole as of one Tenor and Purport, of the same standing and unalterable Obligation; yet upon a careful and attentive Examination of the matter, it will be easy for us to observe a manifest difference between them, and where the same Law is compounded of different Parts, to separate what is *moral* from what is meerly *ceremonial*, and those *political* Rules, which are founded in the Nature and Reason of Things, from those which had respect to the particular Oeconomy and Constitution of the *Jews*. Even the *Decalogue* it self, however justly reputed a Compendium of the *moral Law*, yet is not without mixture of some particulars both of the *political* and *ceremonial* kind, especially as it is explain'd and enforced by other additional Precepts and Injunctions in the Books of *Moses*.

THE fourth Commandment, for example, besides that Leisure and Vacancy from Business, which natural Light would prescribe for the Celebration of divine Worship, has something typical and *ceremonial* intermix'd; namely, the special Observation of the seventh Day, signifying God's resting from the Works of the Creation, his delivering the *Israelites* from their *Egyptian* Bondage, that Delight which he takes in his Elect, when resting and sanctified from Works of Sin, and that future Rest and Happiness, which is proposed as an eternal *Sabbath* to his chosen People. Withal it has something of a *political* or *judicial* kind, both as it prescribes a Vacancy from worldly Cares in the ordering of Civil Life, and also as its Observation is enforced with the capital Sanction or Penalty of Death.

Numb.
xv. 32--36.

So again the fifth Commandment is *moral*, as it requires Children to give *honour* to their Parents: It is *civil* or *political*, as it contains a Promise of the Land of *Canaan*, and the Blessing to be there conferr'd: And it had lastly something *ceremonial*, inasmuch as *Canaan* figur'd out a *better Country*, i. e. *an heavenly*, and was annex'd both as a Sanction and Memorial of those gracious Promises, and that salutary Doctrine which was given to the Church.

ONCE more, the Law against *Murder* is in its Nature plainly *moral*: But the capital Penalty prescribed to punish it, was of a *judicial* Nature; as the Cities of Refuge protecting the involuntary Manslayer till the Death of the High-Priest, which set him altogether free, were *typical* or *ceremonial*, respecting *Christ* our great High-Priest, by whose Death we are deliver'd from the Guilt of Sin, and by his Grace protected against the Malice of the Devil.

FROM all this it will be easily understood that tho' the whole *Law* of *Moses* may in some Sense be reckon'd to refer to *Christ*, as it served to separate and keep up a select Nation or Body of Men, who were as the Depositories of divine Truth, and train'd up in Expectation of him; and likewise as it shew'd the Curse or Penalty, from which we wanted something more powerful to rescue us: Yet it was the *ceremonial Law* which did more specially point out and display the Benefits of his Redemption, and is therefore meant more particularly in the Text, as the *Law given by Moses*, in contradistinction to that *Grace and Truth*, which came by *Jesus Christ*. We will distinctly state this Opposition under both Particulars.

Rom.
iii. 24.

THE *Grace* of the Gospel is taken to imply these two things, either our Justification and Forgiveness of Sins, or else the supernatural Gifts and Graces of the Holy Ghost. In the former Acceptation we are said to be *justified freely by his GRACE, thro' the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ*; and elsewhere,

to

to have Redemption thro' his Blood, the Forgiveness of Sins, according to the Riches of his GRACE. It is in this respect that God is declared to be rich in Mercy for his great Love wherewith he loved us—that in the Ages to come, he might shew the exceeding Riches of his GRACE, in his Kindness towards us thro' Jesus Christ.

Berriman.
Sermon
XVII.

Eph.
i. 6, 7.
—ii. 4.
Ver. 7.

IN this View we may observe that the Grace or Mercy of God is opposed as well to any Merit of Works or Righteousness in Man, as to any real Efficacy of the legal Expiations; to import that our Salvation could never be effected by any Diligence or Care of our own, but solely and entirely by the Favour and Goodness of our heavenly Father, display'd and manifested to us through Jesus Christ. For by GRACE are ye saved, thro' Faith, (as the Apostle goes on) and that not of your selves: It is the Gift of God: Not of Works, lest any Man should boast.

—ii. 8, 9.

AND from hence it is easy to discern how the Grace, which came by Jesus Christ, could never be attained by the Law of Moses. The Imperfection of human Nature must needs disqualify us for discharging any perfect Obedience to the Law moral, and consequently must expose us to its Curse and Condemnation. Here therefore was need of Pardon and Forgiveness to them who owed an Obedience which they could not discharge. To this the ceremonial Law indeed pointed out the way, but it was by Types and Adumbrations; it only shew'd the Privilege, which it could not of it self effect, and by symbolical Atonements prepared the Way for that great and real Atonement, which alone can take away Sin.

IT will hereafter appear, how the Victims of the Law did (in the Apostle's Phrase) sanctify only to the purifying of the Flesh^a, had only an external and symbolical Effect; they consisted in outward Services, and were attended with an outward Efficacy; they cleansed the People from their legal Impurities, and continued or restored them to the Privileges of external Worship. But they did not, could not make him that did the Service perfect as pertaining to the Conscience; they purged not the inner Man from spiritual Defilement, it being no way possible that the Blood of Bulls and of Goats should take away Sins. Herein therefore the Mosaick Law gives Place to the abundant Grace and Mercy of the Gospel, by which all that believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the Law of Moses. This is our Redemption by the Blood of Christ, who thro' the eternal Spirit offer'd himself without spot to God, in order to purge our very Consciences from dead Works to serve the living God. A Privilege which the first Christians were forbidden to expect from the legal Institutions; and to as many as pretended to look after Forgiveness from a Law which could not justify, Christ is declared to be of none effect unto them, they were fallen from GRACE: That Grace which the Prophets prophesied should come unto us; that Purpose and Grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the World began.

Heb. ix. 9.

—x. 4.

Acts
xiii. 39.

Heb.
ix. 14.

Rom.
iii. 20.

Gal. iii. 11.

—v. 4.
1 Pet. i. 10.

2 Tim. i. 9.

BUT besides this Sense of Justification and Forgiveness, the GRACE of the Gospel is otherwise understood to denote the Gifts of the Holy Ghost, whether inwardly sanctifying the Wills and Affections of Men, or endowing them with extraordinary Powers and Abilities. It is in this Sense that we are said to have Gifts differing, according to the GRACE given us; and exhorted to minister one to another, as every Man hath received the Gift, as good Stewards of the manifold GRACE of God: And again, to grow in GRACE, and in the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Now this Gift of the Spirit is promised as the Consequence of Faith in Christ, as being the Result of his Triumph over Death and Hell, and glorious Exaltation at the Right Hand of God: For so we are taught by the Evangelist, in the Time of our Lord's Humiliation, that the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified. The Law of Moses, in its literal View (which is the View

Rom.
xii. 6.

1 Pet.
iv. 10.

2 Pet.
iii. 18.

John
vii. 38.

Gal. iii. 14.

John
vii. 39.

VOL. III.

(8 Y)

wherein

^a Heb. ix. 13. See Sermon XXI, and XXIII.

Berriman.
Sermon
XVII.

2 Cor.
iii. 6-9.

wherein it stands opposed to the Gospel, undertook for no such Benefit, but strictly prescribed the Duties to the Transgressors; whereas the Gospel not only promises Pardon for past Offences, but offers Aid for future Obedience: For which Reason the Law is term'd the *Ministration of the Letter which killeth, and of Death and Condemnation*, in opposition to the Gospel of Christ, which is the *Ministration of the Spirit giving Life*, and of *Righteousness* or Justification.

BUT what then, it may be asked, was the Church of old entirely destitute of the Gifts and Graces of the Spirit? Had they no Hopes, no Promises of Pardon, and Forgiveness of Sins? Why yes; no doubt but they were both communicated in some sort and measure. But as the one were less frequent and exuberant, and the other less clear and explicit, so indeed they were neither of them properly contained in the Law as *given by Moses*, but distinct from it, and as it were the Dawnings of the Gospel. The Letter of the Law (which is what was properly *given by Moses*) prescribed the use of outward Ordinances, which were attended with an outward Efficacy. But if we look to the mystical or secret Meaning of those Ordinances, the inward or spiritual Benefits design'd by them, in that View it differ'd nothing from the Gospel it self, which gives as it were Life and Spirit to the Law, and has been all along the same, tho' not deliver'd with the same Clearness, thro' all Ages of the World. The Gospel, we have seen, had been Preached to our first Parents in Paradise, and after that to *Abraham*: And as the Prescription of Sacrifice and Circumcision in their Days did not, so neither could the *Mosaick* Institutions afterwards be meant to disannul or make void such gracious Promises. Nay, it will appear, in its due Place, that those ritual Institutions were themselves design'd to foreshew and figure out the *Grace* and *Mercy* of the Gospel. Which, whilst it argues the Infirmary and Weakness of the Law by it self, implies at the same Time the abundant Power and Efficacy of the *Grace of Christ*, and teaches us that what that did only in Types and Shadows, he has done in *Truth* and *Verity*.

THAT being the other Term mention'd in the Text, should also in few words be stated and explain'd. *Grace and TRUTH came by Jesus Christ*; or, as you have it a few Verses higher, he was *full of Grace and TRUTH*. It is the Observation of the Author to the *Hebrews*^b, that *the Law had only a Shadow of good Things to come, but not the VERY Image of the Things*. The GOOD THINGS to come, seem here precisely to intend that future Inheritance of everlasting Glory, in respect of which *Christ* is term'd an *High-Priest of good Things to come*. Of these now we, under the Gospel, enjoy the VERY or true Image, such just Descriptions, such lively and clear Representations, partly by the external Word of Revelation, partly by the inward Operations of the Holy Ghost; as do give us the present Foretastes, and Assurances, and Pledges of them. Whereas the *Law* had only the *Shadow*, and gave its Votaries but a dim and imperfect Prospect of that future Happiness by figurative and dark Representations.

OR if the *good Things to come* be taken in a larger Sense for the whole *Christian* Priesthood and Sacrifice, and all that *Christ* did and suffer'd here, in order to perfect our Redemption; then we have the very Body or Substance of those good Things, of which the Law afforded but a faint Shadow, a typical or figurative View. The *Jewish* Tabernacle and Temple (as will appear hereafter) were only figurative of that heavenly Sanctuary, into which^c *Christ* as our *Forerunner* hath already entred. So again the legal Purgations could only serve to the *purifying of the Flesh*: But that foreshew'd the Blood of *Christ*, which should be shed to *purge* our Minds and *Consciences from dead Works*. In like Manner the annual *Atonement* appointed by the Law, was meant to figure out that eternal Redemption and Atonement which is made by *Christ*. And the Admission of the People to the Service of the Tabernacle, when once they had

^b Heb. x. 1. Vid. Schlichtingii Comment. in loc.

^c See *Whitby* in Heb. x. 7.

had been cleansed by legal Sacrifices, denotes our right to enter into Heaven it self, when cleansed by the Blood of *Jesus*. So that the TRUTH in this Case, or the thing really intended, is to be look'd for in the Doctrine of the Gospel; but the Shadow or distant Adumbration of it was the Subject of the Law. And as the thing prefigured was often something done by *Christ* in Person, the Truth is in this respect very emphatically said to be effected by him, i. e. it was his Work or Office to perform that thing in Verity, which the legal Ceremony foreshew'd or shadowed out. *Take and sacrifice a Lamb for your Houses*, says the Law. But *Christ*, instead of appointing other Sacrifices, became himself the VERY *Paschal Lamb*, the Truth intended by that Figure, and offer'd up himself a Sacrifice and Oblation to the Father. Again, it is written in the Law, *Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the Words of this Law to do them*; but *Christ* (says the Apostle) *hath redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, being MADE a Curse for us*.

Berriman.
Sermon
XVII.

Deut.
xxvii. 26.
Gal.iii. 13.

AFTER all this Enlargement upon the Titles or Characters of the two Oeconomies, in that one is term'd the *Law*, and the other described to be *Grace and Truth*; I shall need to say but little in the

2. SECOND Place, concerning the Method or Manner of their Dispensation, in that the one is said to be *given*, the other to *come* or be *effected*. This Variety of Expression is noted by St. *Chrysostom*, as giving a manifest Superiority to the latter above the former. *The Law* was only *given*, i. e. issued out or deliver'd by the Ministry of *Moses*; but the very thing intended by it, that Pardon and Salvation, which it could only notify by Types and Figures, was the *Grace and Truth*, which was really compassed and effected by *Jesus Christ*. Whatever Knowledge of these Things had been given out in former Times, it was but as the Dawning of the Gospel Light, and so far from being really founded in any Occurrences of those Times, that it entirely depended on the future Manifestation and Sacrifice of *Christ*, who is therefore emphatically stiled the *Lamb slain from the Foundation of the World*; inasmuch as all the divine Counsels and Promises of Mercy, that were made from the Beginning, are constantly referr'd to the Acceptance of that Sacrifice, and that Respect which the Deity had always to it. So then whatever might be shewn or pointed out before, yet nothing was really effected but by *Jesus Christ*. In him all the Promises of God are *Yea and Amen*; and whatever Efficacy is ascribed to former Institutions, that is not intrinsical but relative, as they shadowed out the Benefits of *Christ's* Redemption, and applied them in a due proportion to the religious Partakers and Observers of them. *The Law* made nothing perfect by its literal Performance, could bring nothing to effect of it self, or to a full Accomplishment: But the Gospel shadowed by it did, by giving Foundation for a better Hope than the Letter of the Law contain'd, and really effecting that Salvation, which the Law in its typical meaning foreshew'd or figured out. It remains now in the

Rev.
xiii. 8.

2Cor.i.20.

Heb.
vii. 19.

3. THIRD and last Place, that I say something briefly of the different Authors or Promulgers of these two Oeconomies: The one was given by *Moses*; the other came or was effected by *Jesus Christ*.

MOSES verily was faithful in all his House, but as a Servant, as a Minister, as one that acted under the Command and Direction of another. He issued not Laws out in his own Name, nor prescribed a Religion which terminated in himself. But as he continued some Ceremonies which had been anciently used, as Circumcision and Sacrifice, and establish'd others, to which the People of God had not before been accustom'd: So he deliver'd them all as the Result of the divine Appointment, and generally referr'd to the same End of Religion, which had been always in view, to keep up the Hope and Expectation of the promised Redeemer. From hence it is easy

Heb.
iii. 2, 5.

to

* D. Chrysost. in Joan. Hom. 14.

* Ut supr.

* Eysio

Berriman.
Sermon
XVII.

Heb.
xiii. 8.

Rev.
xiii. 8.

to collect, that the outward Observance of these Ceremonies could not be necessary in it self, inasmuch as it had not been required in all Ages, and was then only subservient to a future Good, to prepare the Way to something afterwards, and consequently of no farther use, when that End it self should be attained. But *Jesus Christ* is *the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever*: the Benefit of his Redemption is the Fountain and Foundation of reveal'd Religion, and runs thro' every Oeconomy of Worship, which God has been pleased to prescribe from the Beginning. He is *the Lamb slain from the Foundation of the World*. The Sacrifices of the Patriarchs, and the manifold Ceremonies of the Law of *Moses*, were meant (as we shall see) to point and refer to that great and satisfactory Atonement^s, which was to be provided by this promised Redeemer. Consequently the Benefits procured by him were to be stable and perfect, as being those to which the former Revelations were referr'd, and in which they were to terminate. So that the *Christian* Religion was taught from the Time of Man's Apostasy; and tho' the outward Shell or Covering might be Matter of temporary Institution, yet the inward Design or Meaning of it was that same *Grace and Truth*, which is reach'd out to us by the Gospel, which has *Jesus Christ* for its Author, and is of unalterable Use and Benefit. He was not as *Moses*, whose Acts were meerly ministerial, and whose Institutions had no other Effect but what was typical and relative: But he offer'd a Sacrifice, which had Virtue in it self to expiate the Guilt of Sin, and was accepted for its own intrinsick Worth and Excellence.

THUS far it was proper to proceed at this Time, in explaining that *Antithesis*, which is stated in the Text, between the Law and the Gospel; and whether the Adversaries of our Religion will admit it to be just or no, I conceive it can hardly be disputed, but that it is a reasonable Account of the Evangelical Scheme, or that Interpretation which the New Testament has given of the Old. But as it has often been suggested, in the Course of this Exposition, that the Law it self was but a temporary Discipline, and that its principal Use was to convey those Truths, under the Cover of external Ceremonies, which the Gospel has more nakedly and explicitly deliver'd; it will be greatly material that both these Points be more strictly open'd, to the end it may appear, that the great Alteration which has been made in the Oeconomy of reveal'd Religion, is no arbitrary Imposition or Innovation of *Christianity*, but really founded in the Nature of Things, and agreeable to the very Genius and Design of the ancient Institutions. This therefore was the Purport of the two remaining Heads I had propos'd; and they must be left for the Subject of some following Discourses.

^s See the four last Sermons.

SERMON

SERMON XVIII.

The *Jewish* Arguments for the Perpetuity of the
Law, refuted.

Preached *February* the 7th, 1731-2.

The Second SERMON on this TEXT.

JOHN i. 17.

*For the Law was given by Moses, but Grace and Truth came by
Jesus Christ.*

AS the *Mosaick Law* has been mention'd in the Course of these Lectures * for a standing Prophecy of the *Messiah*, and did typically contain or involve in it the Gospel it self, or those sublime Doctrines which concern the great Mystery of our Redemption; so that it is proper to distinguish the Letter or outward Part of the *Law*, which was ritual and alterable, from its inward Meaning, which is spiritual and permanent: I propos'd, for the easier Dispatch of this Subject, to digest my Observations upon it under three Heads, viz.

Berriman.
Sermon
XVIII.

- I. To explain the *Antithesis*, which is stated in the Text, between the *Law* of *Moses* and the *Gospel* of *Christ*. Then,
- II. To shew by clear and convincing Arguments, that the *Mosaick Law* was not design'd to have an universal or perpetual Obligation; but serv'd as a preparatory Discipline to lead Men to the Gospel, and was to terminate in the Days of the *Messiah*. And,
- III. To point out and explain how it serv'd this Purpose by its Types and Prefigurations, which foreshew'd the Office and Character of the *Messiah*, and made such Application of his Benefits, as was suited to that Age of the World, and proportion'd to the Faith and Sincerity of its Observers.

I. THE first of these was the Subject of a former Discourse, wherein the *Antithesis* of the Text was explain'd to import, that however the *ceremonial Law* of *Moses*, if taken in its mystical and latent Meaning, did teach and contain the very Doctrine of the Gospel of *Christ*, yet it did it only under the Cover of Types and figurative Resemblances; the naked Letter, if taken by it self, fell short of answering the Ends of Religion: Whereas the Reality or

VOL. III.

(8 Z)

Truth

* See Serm. VII, VIII, IX, &c.

Berriman.
Sermon
XVIII.

Truth of those Benefits, which that only shadow'd out, is openly contain'd, and deliver'd by the Doctrine of the Gospel; that *Grace* and Mercy, that Pardon and Salvation, which was more obscurely reveal'd and applied to the Faithful under the Old Testament, is most evidently display'd in the New, and proclaim'd to be really purchased and secured to us. This naturally suggests an Opinion of the temporary Use and Obligation of the former Oeconomy, that when the Substance was come, when the End of all was attain'd, the Means which only led to it, the typical Institutions which foreshew'd it future, must of course be superseded, and of no longer Use or Significance. This is what the

II. SECOND Head propos'd to shew, viz. that the *Mosaick Law* was not design'd to have an universal or perpetual Obligation, but serv'd as a preparatory Discipline to lead Men to the *Gospel*, and was to terminate in the Days of the *Messiah*. And to do this with the better Dispatch, I shall,

I. OVERTHROW the Jewish Arguments for the opposite Opinion. And then,

2. PROPOSE those by which our own is supported.

I. FIRST, therefore, I begin with examining those Arguments which are alledg'd by the modern *Jews*, to assert the Immutability and perpetual Obligation of the *Law of Moses*. I mention the modern *Jews*, because it is certain that however that People have in all Ages inclined to lay too great stress on the outward Observance of the *Law*, yet there are some Passages still extant of the Ancients, which suggest a Period for its Abrogation, and which the Moderns, with all their softening, are hard put to it to reconcile with their Opinion. Nor indeed are the Moderns universally agreed in this Particular. For tho' *Maimonides*^b has reckon'd the *Perpetuity* of the *Law* among the Articles of his Religion, and endeavour'd to support it by Variety of Arguments; yet they have been examin'd and refuted, or given up, above three hundred Years ago, by R. *Joseph Albo*^c, tho' in a Book purposely written in opposition to Christianity; and *Maimonides* himself has advanced, in other Places, such Positions as seem not very well consistent with his own *Hypothesis*. His side of the Question has however been espoused by others, and particularly by *Abarbanel*^d, who strove to defend it both from Reason and Scripture, and to shew it not inconsistent with the Judgment of the Ancients. I would consider both kinds of Arguments distinctly, that it may clearly appear there is no manner of Solidity or Weight in them.

(I.) FIRST then, as to those Arguments which are drawn from Reason, the Sum of them amounts to this, that the *Law of the Lord* is perfect in it self, the Result of that divine Wisdom which is constant and unchangeable, and directed to an End which is always necessary, viz. to promote the Happiness and Good of Men.

BUT who sees not the Fallacy of this way of Reasoning? The divine Wisdom without doubt is constant and unchangeable, as being absolutely perfect, and incapable either of Increase or Diminution. But the Laws of God, altho' the Result of such consummate Wisdom, yet have not the same absolute Perfection in themselves, but only such as is limited and relative. Tho' given by God, who is infinite and immutable, yet they relate to Men who are mutable and finite Beings. From whence many Grounds of Variation may arise with respect to Time and Place, and other Circumstances; and for that very Reason, because the Author is invariable, he may choose to make some Alteration in his Laws, that they may better suit the alterable State of Mankind, and more uniformly conduce to promote their Welfare and Felicity. The different Con-

ditions

^b *Jefode Hattorah*, c. 9.

^c *Rosch Amana*, cap. 13.

^d *Sepher Ikkarim*, citante Vorstio.

ditions of the Church in this respect, are very elegantly represented by the A-^{Berriman.} postle, under the Emblem of the *Heir* to an Estate considered under different ^{Sermon} Views, either in a State of Nonage, or in a State of Maturity. So that as the ^{XVIII.} Rules and Discipline which were proper for the Minor, would ill suit with ^{Gal. iv. 1.} him who is come to Man's Estate, in like manner several of those Laws which were wisely given to the People of God, in earlier Ages and under greater Obscurity, may to the same Wisdom seem unfit to be continued, after the spreading of that Light and Knowledge of Salvation which is so magnificently predicted by the ancient Prophets. This can be no Argument of Mutability in God, but of the most constant and tenderest Regard to the Weakness and Necessity of Man.

ACCORDINGLY we find in Fact, that his Laws have been suitably diversified; and tho' there be some standing Rules which are never to be abrogated, as being founded in the necessary Relations between Creature and Creator, or those between one Creature and another: yet there are others which appear to be of a more alterable Nature, and therefore have been differently suited to the Circumstance of Time and Opportunity.

THESE also have an inward Meaning, which respect the Sanctification of the Mind, and the Obedience of Faith, and is conformable to that divine Wisdom, which is constant and unchangeable. But the outward Letter of the Precept is only as a Case or Covering to that inward Meaning, which, in proportion to the Tempers and Apprehensions of Men, may be liable to Change and Alteration.

THUS different Precepts were prescribed to *Adam*, to *Noah*, and to *Abraham*; and yet none of them were subject to that Multitude of Ceremonies which composed the Body of the Law of *Moses*. And if then it be no Impeachment of the divine Wisdom, that those Rites were not prescribed to the first Ages of the World, there can be no arguing from Reason that future Ages may not be released from them again, or that that which was not imposed from the Beginning must needs be required to the End.

MAIMONIDES himself, as great a Stickler as he was for the Perpetuity of the *Mosaick Law*, and every thing being ordain'd for some fix'd and certain End or Purpose, has yet assign'd such Causes or Reasons for divers Institutions, as are plainly of an alterable Kind, and may serve to intimate that, when those Reasons ceased, it could be no way unworthy of God to set aside the Institution. The first Invention of the *Law*^e, according to him, was to extirpate and root out all Remains of Idolatry, Divination and Enchantment; and tho' the true Worship of God consists in the inward Love and Fear of him, yet many external Precepts (he observes) were added, in opposition to the Rites and Worship of the *Zabians*, and the better to secure those great Points against all idolatrous Encroachments. Since then the Rites and Worship, against which they were levell'd, have long since ceas'd and are forgotten, why should it be urg'd as any Proof of Inconstancy, if God sees fit to abrogate the Precepts, as of no longer Use or Significance?

BUT upon the *Christian* Scheme, this Argument may be push'd farther still. I trust it will appear, that *the Law* was intended for a *Schoolmaster* to lead to *Christ*, and foreshew the Benefits of his appearing. But when that he was come in Person, there was no more occasion for a *Schoolmaster*. It was not, then, for the Dishonour of the *Law*, that its ritual Injunctions were no longer necessary; their End was serv'd, and they expired of course. It can be no Argument of Change in God, that those ritual Precepts are rather obsolete than abrogated; that those Institutions, which were not good in themselves, but only expedient for a time, are no longer exacted since that time expired, and their Expediency has ceased. For this reason, the *Gospel* is so far from pretending to be a new or different Law, as to any essential Parts of Duty, that it even ventures to establish itself upon the old Foundation, and appeals to *Moses* for the Proof and

^e More Nevoch. par. 3. c. 29, 37.

Berriman. and Confirmation of it. It teaches us, that *Moses was faithful in all his House as a*
 Sermon. *Servant, for a Testimony of those Things which were to be spoken after*; and for that
 XVIII. reason taxes the *Jews* with not believing *Moses*, because they believ'd not *Jesus* of
 Heb. whom he wrote; for had they done that *Will of God* which *Moses* had reveal'd,
 iii. 5. they should have known of his *Doctrine*, whether it were of *God*, or whether he
 John spoke it of himself; had they diligently search'd those *Scriptures*, in which they pro-
 v. 46. fess'd to place their Hopes of *eternal Life*, they should have easily perceived how
 — vii. 17. amply they bore witness and testified of him. From whence also we may learn
 — v. 39. the meaning of that Declaration of our blessed Saviour, which the *Jews* are so
 Mat. forward to object against us upon this occasion, that he *came not to destroy the*
 v. 17. *Law, but to fulfil it*; to fulfil it, not only by a punctual Obedience in his own
 Person, but by really performing what that only figured out, and so causing it
 to reach its full End and Design.

AND so far of the Argument deduced from Reason: We are in the next place to consider,

(2.) SECONDLY, what the *Jews* have to offer from the ancient *Scriptures*, in proof the same Point, namely, the perpetual Obligation of the *Law of Moses*. And two or three of these Texts I shall dispatch in very few Words, as being plainly mistaken or perverted: but shall dwell longer on those which seem to be more specious and plausible.

THE first Text which *Maimonides*^f alledges to this Purpose, is that of *Deut.* xii. 32. *What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto nor diminish from it.* From whence he would collect, that the *Mosaic Law* must needs be immutable, and neither capable of Increase nor Diminution. But the Answer to this was easily made by Rabbi *Joseph Albo*^g, that if we take that Text in the greatest Latitude, it can at most be understood only to restrain Men from adding or detracting for their own Pleasure or Fancy, but by no means to exclude God from making such Alterations as shall seem good to his consummate Wisdom. The words are directed to the Subject, [*thou shalt not add nor diminish*] but cannot be understood to lay any Restraint on the supreme Law-giver.

ANOTHER Text urged by him to the same Purpose, is *Deut.* xxx. 12. where *Moses*, speaking of the Commandment which he had set before the People, says, — *it is not in Heaven, that thou shouldst say, Who shall go up for us to Heaven, and bring it unto us, that we may hear it, and do it?* As if the Meaning were, that there was no new Law to be expected from *Heaven*, or the God of *Heaven*! But a slight Inspection of the Place may convince us, that here could be no Point in view which respected either the Change or Duration of the *Law*^h. But as *Moses* was exhorting them to a steady Observation of the divine Law, so he pertinently enforces his Advice from the great Ease and Facility of complying with it, in that this Word was neither *hidden* nor *far off*, neither *in Heaven*, nor *beyond the Sea*, but *very nigh unto them, in their Mouth, and in their Heart*, that they might *do it*. So that the plain Meaning is, not that no Word should ever after come from *Heaven*, but that the *Law* they were to observe was not then *in Heaven*, but near at hand upon *Earth*, in their Mouths and in their Hearts.

THERE is another Text sometimes mention'd to the same Purpose from *Malachi*, the last of the *Jewish* Prophets, who left with them this solemn Charge or Advice — *Remember ye the Law of Moses, my Servant, which I commanded to him in Horeb, for all Israel, with the Statutes and Judgments.* But as there is plain Reason to be given, from the Degeneracy of the People at that time, from their being newly return'd out of Captivity to the Opportunities of publick Worship, and from the near Expiration of the Gift of Prophecyⁱ, why they

^f *Jesode Hattorah*, c. 9. §. 1.

^g *Sepher Ikkarim*, citante Vorstio. Annot. ad Maim. p. 121. & Voisin. Observat. in proöm. Pug. fid. p. 121.

^h See Vorstius in Annot. ad Maimon. *Jesode Hattorah*, seu de Fundament. Legis, p. 123.

ⁱ See Bishop Kidder's Demonstr. of the *Messias*, Part 3. c. 1.

they should then more particularly be required to look to the *Mosaick Institutions* as the Rule then in force, without implying them to be absolutely immutable: so indeed the words that follow do rather intimate there was a *Day* a coming, when a new Direction might be reasonably expected, which should be preceded by the coming of *Elias*.

THE Argument from these Passages is but slight and inconsiderable: but there is more Appearance of Solidity in what is further argued¹ from another Place in *Deut. xxix. 29.* *Those Things which are revealed belong unto us, and to our Children FOR EVER, that we may do all the Words of this Law.* And this seems to be greatly confirm'd by such other Passages, where any of the ritual Institutions are prescribed to be **כְּרִית עוֹלָם** a Covenant FOR EVER, or an everlasting Covenant, and **חֻקֵּי עוֹלָם לְדוֹרוֹתֵינוּ** a Statute or Ordinance FOR EVER throughout your Generations. Thus, to begin with Circumcision, which was enjoin'd to Abraham long before the time of Moses; God says of it, *My Covenant shall be in your Flesh for an everlasting Covenant.* So again of the Sabbath, it was said to Moses — *The Children of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, to observe the Sabbath throughout their Generations, for a perpetual Covenant: it is a Sign between me and the Children of Israel FOR EVER.* In like manner of the Paschal Solemnity, it is said twice or thrice in one Chapter to the same effect — *You shall keep it a Feast to the Lord throughout your Generations, you shall keep it a Feast by an Ordinance FOR EVER.* The same is observable in the Books of Moses, concerning the First-Fruits, the Feasts of Pentecost and of Tabernacles, and the Day of Expiation or Atonement, the Oil for the Lamps, the Office, Portion and Vestments of the Priests, with many of their Sacrifices and Oblations, the Possession of the Levites, the brazen Laver, and the Shew-bread: which are all mentioned under this form, or to this effect — *It shall be a Statute for ever in all your Dwellings throughout your Generations*¹. To all which we may add the Law concerning the Water of Purification, mix'd with the Ashes of the red Heifer, which is likewise enjoin'd unto the Children of Israel, and unto the Stranger that sojourneth among them, for a perpetual Statute, or a Statute for ever. From all which it is argued by the Zealots for the Old Law, that no length of time can ever put an end to the *Mosaick Institutions*; and that consequently that Religion which shall pretend to set aside the Use of them, and look on them as obsolete, is for that very reason to be charg'd with Delusion and Imposture.

BUT in answer to all this, it has very justly been observ'd by Jewish, as well as Christian Writers, that the words *olam* and *le'olam* or *ad olam*, which we render for ever and everlasting, do properly signify for the Age; which will admit of very different Interpretations, conformably to the nature of those things to which it is applied; and is accordingly used to express as well a limited (and sometimes very short) Duration, as that which is interminable and in the strictest Sense eternal. Thus when *Jehovah* is styled **אֵל עוֹלָם** the Everlasting God, or the God of the Age, we understand that Age which suits with the Existence of the Deity, and that is the most boundless and unlimited Eternity. But when *Hannah* devoted her Son *Samuel* to appear before the Lord, and to abide there **עַד עוֹלָם** for the Age, (which our Translation calls for ever) she could not possibly mean it beyond Term of Life, as she has clearly express'd her Vow for making him a *Nazarite*: and R. Solomon observes upon the Place, that it ought not to be extended beyond the Age of the Levites, which was fifty Years; after which Age they were no longer permitted by the Law to attend the Service of the Sanctuary.

IN like manner, when the Law prescribes, concerning the Servant that should refuse to accept his Freedom, that his Master should bore his Ear with an Awl, and he should be to him *Ebed Olam*, a Servant of the Age, or for ever; Deut. xv. 17. Exod. xxi. 6.

VOL. III.

(9 A)

¹ Maim. ut supra. Vid. & Raymund. Martin. Pugio Fidei, par. 3. dist. 3. c. 11. Item Galatin. de Arcan. Cathol. Verit. l. 11. c. 5.

² To those Texts of *Leviticus*, add also *Exod. xxvii. 21. — xxviii. 41. — xxix. 2, 28. — xxx. 21. — xl. 15. Numb. x. 8. — xv. 15. — xviii. 8, 11, 19, 23. — xxv. 13.*

Berriman. ever; it is in the nature of the thing impossible it should extend beyond the Life of the Servant: and the Talmudists^m add, that it ought not to extend beyond the Life of the Master, because the Law says, he shall be a Servant to him, but not to his Heirs after him. Nay, and besides all this, the Jews generally agree that it could not extend beyond the Year of Jubileeⁿ, when, as well the Lands that were mortgaged, as the Persons that were under Servitude, were of course to be set free or restored to Liberty. So that the AGE in this Place is, according to them, the Age of Jubilee: And as that return'd every fifty Years, it might happen that the AGE or Time, for which this Servant was bound, might be considerably either more or less, in proportion as that Cycle was either newly begun, or nearer to its Expiration. And this Exposition of the Phrase is not a little confirm'd by that Law we meet with in *Leviticus*, concerning Houses bought in walled Cities, which, if not redeem'd within a Year, were establish'd to the Purchaser for ever throughout his Generations, so as not to go out in the Year of Jubilee. In which case, tho' our Translation keeps the same Phrase, yet that in the Original is manifestly varied, and such Houses are not said to be established to the Purchaser לעולם for the Age, but לצמיתת to the Excision, i. e. so as to cut off all right of reverting to the ancient Possessor any more: Which affords a good Presumption that the Word לעולם had not been strong enough for that purpose.

I would mention but two Places more, and they respect a limited Duration for Time past. The first is that of the *Proverbs*; Remove not the ANCIENT Land-mark, which thy Fathers have set. The Hebrew is גבול עולם the Bound of the Age, which (if we render it conformably to other Places) will be the everlasting Bound: And yet as *Kimchi*^o observes, it means only the Bound which has stood מומן רב for a long Time. The other is that of the Prophet *Jeremy*, for of old מעולם from the Age I have broken thy Yoak, and burst thy Bands, and thou saidst I will not transgress; which cannot possibly be carried up beyond the Time when Israel became a Nation, and suffer'd Punishment for their Iniquities, and is therefore explained by *Kimchi*^p to mean only from a long Time or Age; who therefore observes also, as to Time future, that after many Days there may come an end of such a long Age.

It deserves also to be noted from the same Expofitor^q, that the Jews have a Tradition, which they refer to the House of Eleasar, that there are three Words in their Language of a stricter import, viz. נצה Netsabb, סלה Selah, and ער Ad; and in all Places wherever they occur, there is intended a continual and unlimited Duration, without any Intermission or End. Since therefore, no one of these Words is ever used in all that variety of Places, which prescribe the Ceremonies of the Law, but only the Word עולם Olam, which plainly appears in many Cases to have a limited Signification; this may be thought to argue, not improbably, that it is here also used in a restrained Acceptation, and means a continuance of long standing, but short of everlasting. Nor may it be omitted that *Maimonides*^r has plainly misrepresented this Point, when he affirms it to be a Matter declared in the Law, not only that its Precepts were to endure לעולם for the Age, but לעולמי עולמים for Ages of Ages. This, I say, is an unfair Representation, there being no such Expression

^m לך ולא ליורשיו *Gem. Babyl. ad tit. Kiddushin, fol. 14. 2.* fol. 15. 1. And the same is implied in the Text of the *Misna* it self, where the Servant with the Ear bored is said to gain his Liberty כינוכל וכמיתת הארון either at the Jubilee, or at the Death of his Master. But *Maimonides* and *Bartenora* make a distinction in this Case, that if the Master left a Son, and the Servant had not serv'd six Years, he should serve his Son to the end of the six Years, tho' not to any other Heir: But for perpetual Servitude, he was bound to his Master only: And even that was understood to determine with the Jubilee.

ⁿ עלם. *Kimchi Miclol. rad.* כל הימים שר היונל.

^o In Rad. עלם.

^p Ibid. וכן בא על ימים רבים וקצת העולם הארוך.

^q *Kimchi in Rad. סל* Vid. & *Raym. Martin. Pug. fid. par. 3. diff. 3. cap. 11. § 11, 12.*

^r *Jesode Hattorah, cap. 9. § 11.*

Expressi^{on} any where applied to any of the ceremonial Institutions of the *Law* Berriman. Sermon XVIII. of *Moses*, but only עולם or לעולם or ער עולם in the singular, which, tho' it may sometimes admit of the same extensive Signification with the other, is yet capable of a more limited and restrain'd Interpretation.

Now tho' it is demonstrably certain from all this, that in those Passages, where this Phrase is applied to the *Mosaick* Institutions, it must needs be understood of a limited and determinable Duration; yet it is evident however, that we cannot be obliged to understand it of such as is absolutely to continue throughout all Ages: And consequently it cannot be of any force against us, when urg'd either as an Objection to the *Gospel* Oeconomy, or an Argument for the perpetual Duration of the *Law*. For if the Phrase does plainly admit of Limitations, what should hinder us from applying them in this Case? It must lie upon our Adversaries to assign the grounds for their excluding them.

BUT then especially, if it should appear, that there is any known and allow'd Acceptation of the Word עולם *Olam*, which is more particularly applicable to such limited or temporary Duration of the *Mosaick* Institutions; in such Case it will be highly probable, that that is the Acceptation intended in such Passages: And so, what they are used to glory in as an invincible Proof of the Perpetuity of the *Law*, will become almost an Argument against it.

THERE is a celebrated Distinction among the *Jewish* Writers between עולם הזה *this Age or World*, and עולם הבא *the Age or World to come*[†]; by this latter meaning the *Age* of the *Messiah*, and the Time when they should be subject to his Direction and Discipline, and by the other meaning that Time and State of Things which was previous and preparatory to it. I do not mean that that Distinction is always to be so understood: For sometimes it may mean this present mortal Life, in opposition to the State of the Soul after Death, or in the Time of Separation. At other Times it may mean the present State of the World, or of Mankind in general, in opposition to that future State which will succeed the Resurrection of the Dead. But at other Times it is certainly used among the *Jews*, as well ancient as modern, in the Sense before mentioned: Which withal is not a little countenanced by those Places of the Prophets, which describe the State of things in the Days of the *Messiah* under the Character of *new Heavens and a new Earth*, introduced by the shaking of the Heavens and the Earth, and of all Nations. From whence we are not to wonder, if, with Reference to this Distinction, some[‡] Expositors have explain'd that Declaration of our blessed Lord concerning the *Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost*, that it *shall not be forgiven, neither in this World, nor in the World to come*[§]; and that of the Author to the *Hebrews*, when, in stating the Excellency of the *Christian* Dispensation above the *Legal*, he has this Expressi^{on}, *Unto the Angels hath he not put in subjection the WORLD TO COME, whereof we speak*[¶]. Isa. lxxv. 17. Hagg. ii. 6, 7.

Now this being the allow'd Use and Application of the Word עולם, it seems very natural to suppose, that when any of the *Mosaick* Precepts are mentioned to endure לעולם *for the Age*, this should not be taken in the most absolute and unrestrained Sense, but respectively to the *Mosaick* Oeconomy, as being to endure throughout that AGE and State of things in which they were instituted, or till the other should commence. They were to last throughout the עולם הזה, the Age before the *Messiah*, which will imply they should be abrogated in the עולם הבא, or the Age of the *Messiah* it self. And this might be the meaning of those other Phrases which are so often added, that these Rites should be observ'd *in their Dwellings, throughout their Generations; i. e.* as long as they had possession of that Land of Promise, which God was then about

[†] Elias Thisbit rat. עלם & עתיר Vid. & Druf. Præterit. in Mat. xii. 32. Item Wisli Miscel. Sacr. lib. 2. Dissert. 6.

[‡] Druf. ut supr.

[§] 'Ουτε ἐν τῷ αἰῶνι, ἔτι ἐν τῷ μέλλοντι, Matt. xii. 32.

[¶] Οἰκουμένην πὺν μέλλουσιν, Heb. ii. 5.

Berriman. about to give them. Thus it seems to be explain'd by Moses himself — *These*
 Sermon XVIII. *are the Statutes and Judgments which ye shall observe to do in the Land, which*
 Deut. xii. 1 *the Lord God of thy Fathers giveth thee to possess it, all the Days that ye live*
upon the Earth; or, as the Hebrew expresses it in another Verse, all thy Days
upon thy Earth, i. e. the Land of Canaan. Accordingly it has been ob-
 serv'd, that in the Captivity at Babylon, the Jews did not think themselves
 obliged to observe the legal Festivals. Daniel fasted three whole Weeks together
 Dan. in the first Month, and consequently did not keep the Passover. And from
 x. 2, 3, 4 hence St. Chrysostom blames the Jews of his Time for observing their Festivals
 in other Countries, against the Example of their Ancestors. The believing
 Jews were indulged in adhering to the legal Precepts while the Temple stood;
 but the compleat Destruction of their City and Temple (which neither Friend-
 ship nor Malice has been able to restore) has now put a final Period to the
 Law, and its Prescriptions.

It may also be worth our observing, that as the legal Precepts are capable
 of being distinguish'd into such constant and stated Rules as came on regularly
 and of course in their successive Periods, and such as may be called occasional,
 which were prescribed to be observ'd *pro re nata*, as occasion offer'd, or was
 ministred by some present Circumstance of Affairs: So the Character of a
 Statute or Ordinance of the AGE, or for ever, is most properly applied, under
 the first Branch of the Distinction, to such Rites as were ordinarily required
 in the Course of their Religion, and not prescribed only *pro hic & nunc*, for a
 sudden and transient Occasion, which might return no more. This was
 plainly the Case in many of the Instances abovementioned, in those standing
 Ordinances of Religion, which relate to the Feasts of Passover, Pentecost, and
 Tabernacles, the Day of Atonement, the Vestments of the Priests, the Possession
 of the Levites, and those Sacrifices which were made by a fixed and stated
 Obligation. And if the same Phrase is likewise used in the Prescription of
 those Sacrifices, which were occasional only, and made at the free will and op-
 tion of the People; yet it is to be observ'd that it is not then applied to the
 whole of the Institution, but only to some general Rule that is laid down con-
 cerning it, as a Matter that was designed to be constant and unchangeable,
 whenever such Sacrifices were perform'd; or perhaps a Rule that should ob-
 tain not in that Instance alone, but throughout all their Sacrifices, and in other
 Cases also. Thus in the three first Chapters of Leviticus, which contain the
 Laws of free-will Offerings, there is no Expression to enjoin them by an Ordi-
 nance for ever; but after its being mention'd that the Fat, or Suet upon the
 Inwards should be burnt for a sweet Savour, and specially appropriate to God,
 it is added as a standing and invariable Rule — *It shall be a perpetual Statute*
 (חק עולם) *for your Generations throughout all your Dwellings, that ye eat nei-*
 Lev. iii. 17 *ther Fat nor Blood, i. e. This shall be a Statute extending to all Cases with-*
 out exception, that those Parts, which in every Victim are sacred to the Altar,
 shall never upon any occasion be profaned by common Use. From all which
 it may seem not to be improbably collected, that the true Import of the Phrase is
 calculated to point out a standing or stated Rule, in opposition to such as are
 contingent or occasional.

Thus far we have consider'd those Arguments which are alledg'd by
 the Jews, either from Reason or Scripture, to establish the Perpetuity and
 invariable Obligation of the Mosaic Law. And I think it must be allow'd
 that they fall short of the Point, and fail of inferring that Conclusion which
 is

כל ימך על ארץ מתך — ver. 19.

z See Dr. Jenkins's Reasonbl. of Christian Rel. vol. 2. chap. 15.

a Καὶ ὅτι τῶν ἱερῶν τῶν Ἰουδαϊκῶν, ἡ καὶ ἐν μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ πᾶν ὡσαύτως ἐκέλευεν ὁ νόμος,
 D. Chrysost. adv. Judæos, Orat. 1. Tom. 6. Edit. Savil. p. 315. — ἡ τὰ τότε ὡσαύτως τῆς αὐτοῦ καὶ
 ὡσαύτως ἐστὶν ἀναγκασίαν — ὅταν γὰρ φαίνοιτο ἐκεῖνοι μὴτε θύσαντες, μὴτε αὐτὴν αὐτὴν ὡσαύτως
 ἀλλολείας — ὅπου γὰρ θυσία ἐκ ἧν, ἐκ τῆς ἱερῆς ἧν, Ibid. pag. 316.

is endeavour'd to be made by them. At least then the *Jews* can have no-
 thing certain to alledge on their side of the Question; but for aught they have
 to say to the contrary, the ritual Injunctions of the *Law* of *Moses* may be
 chang'd or grow obsolete. The Constancy of the Author is not at all im-
 pair'd by suiting his Laws to the Condition of those who should obey them.
 And that Perpetuity, which seems to be ascribed to them, is not absolute, but
 relative; and therefore may, without any inconsistency, admit a Change or
 Variation.

It remains then to be enquired, what we have to alledge on the other
 hand, to prove that they are changed accordingly. And if it may be shewn
 by many Arguments—from the Nature of its Precepts, not founded in the
 Reason and Relation of things—from the spiritual Explication that is given
 of some of them in the Old Testament it self—from their being peculiarly
 calculated for the People and Tract of *Canaan*, whereas the *Messiah's* Kingdom
 was to extend over the whole World—from the express Predictions that re-
 main of some of the principal *Mosaick* Rites to be alter'd or abolish'd—from
 the mention of another *Law*, to be given by *Messiah*, different from the old
 one—and from the plain Tendency of those ancient Rites to prefigure and
 introduce the *Gospel*-Benefits: I say, if from all this it can be shewn, that the
 Law of *Moses* was design'd in fact to undergo an Alteration, or give Place to
 that of the *Messiah*, then we have gain'd the Point which we are arguing against
 the *Jews*; and it is so far from giving any real handle of Objection against the
Christian System, to have made a change in this respect, that it could not indeed
 have been the Dispensation of *Messiah*, if it had done otherwise. The end of
 the *Old Law* was serv'd, and a new one was promised to be given, which might
 better answer the Extent and spiritual Purposes of the *Messiah's* Kingdom, not
 confined, like that, within the Bounds of *Palestine*, nor conceal'd in ritual Ob-
 servances. It is a Point of great importance to the enforcement and defence of
 the *Christian* Religion: But the clearing of this Matter will deserve farther en-
 largement in some following Discourses.

Now to God the Father, &c.

SERMON XIX.

The *Mosaick* Law shewn not to be Perpetual from the Tenor of its Precepts.

Preached March the 6th, 1731-2.

The Third SERMON on this TEXT.

JOHN i. 17.

For the Law was given by Moses, but Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ.

Berriman.
Sermon
XIX.

THE Arguments by which the *Jews* endeavour to maintain the Perpetuity of the *Mosaick Law*, are either taken from the Reason of the Case, that it proceeds from an Author who is constant and unchangeable, and is directed to an End that is always necessary, *viz.* the Happiness and Good of Men: or else from such Passages of Scripture as are either thought directly to assert it of the whole, or else wherein some of its ritual Precepts are enjoin'd by *an Ordinance for ever, throughout their Generations*. It was the Business of the last Discourse to give Satisfaction to both these Objections: After which we may assume it as a Matter at least possible, that the ritual Injunctions of the *Law* may be changed or abolished. It remains then to be enquired, in the

2. SECOND Place, what we have to alledge on the other hand, to prove that they are changed accordingly. And because the Arguments to this purpose are of different Sorts, it will be proper to digest them into distinct Articles, in order to treat of them apart. And,

(1.) FIRST, I would argue from the nature of *legal* Precepts, as not being founded in the Reason, or Relations of Things. It may be remember'd, that we are treating now of the *Ceremonial Law*, as it is distinguished from the *Moral*; and therefore, tho' we do confess the Obligation of this last, in regard of that Foundation which it plainly had in the Nature and Reason of Things, which shews it to be conformable to the Divine Will, antecedently to the Promulgation of the *Law* of *Moses*; yet we may consistently dispute the Obligation of the other, as not appearing to rest upon the same Foundation.

IT must also be acknowledg'd, that the Will of God reveal'd, is a sufficient ground for our Obedience, altho' there were no apparent ground to be collected from the Reasons and Relations of Things. But then since it is He who has plac'd Things in such order and relations, and made that the most general Method of

of notifying his *Will* to Mankind, there is reason to believe that the Duties herein founded are fixed and unalterable, as being conformable to the Nature and Attributes of God himself: whereas the same is not to be said of those Duties which are founded meerly upon Precept, since they may be variously accommodated to Persons, Places, and Seasons, and for the same Reason, which made them at one time expedient, they may become inconvenient at another.

It must nevertheless be granted, that even these Duties have an inward Meaning, which is moral and unalterable; and tho' the outward Matter be liable to Change and Variation, yet the Faith and Obedience express'd by it is always necessary, and will have the same Acceptance with our Judge and Law-giver, when it exerts itself in *positive*, as when in *moral* Duties. But the real difference lies here, that tho' the outward Act is in neither case acceptable by it self, yet in one case it ought to flow from the inward Disposition, supposing a Concurrence of proper Circumstances, altho' there were no *outward Law* to require and exact it; whereas in the other case, it depends on the Subsistence of some *positive Law* to exact and make it necessary. The inward Part of both is always necessary, and alike in both gives value to the Action; but the outward part of one is founded on some mutable Respects, and therefore subject to Change and Alteration. The wiser Men among the *Jews* were not insensible of this Distinction: and *Maimonides*, himself, ^a with all his Zeal for the Perpetuity of *legal* Precepts, could not but confess a difference between those which he calls *intellectual*, and which would have deserv'd to be written, if they were not so already; and those which, if not prescrib'd by an express Law, might have been left unobserved without Sin.

AFTER all, I am not insensible what has sometimes been alledg'd by the *Jews*, ^b that there may possibly be some secret *Relations* of Things undiscoverable by us, from whence the legal Precepts may be reasonable in themselves, and founded in a real Necessity of Nature, and ought so to be accounted, because they are ordained by the Wisdom of the supream Law-giver, although that Reason or Necessity be not apparent to the Wisdom or Philosophy of Men. But to this it may be answer'd, that our Obedience can be no farther rational, than whilst we see sufficient Grounds and Reasons for it. The Command of the supream Law-giver is no doubt a rational ground of our Obedience, and we may from thence collect that there is a Fitness and Congruity in the thing commanded, altho' we should perceive no other Reason but the Command it self. But if we would say, whether this Fitness and Congruity is necessary and immutable, or transient and occasional, there must be other Considerations taken in for the decision of this Question; and, except the Matter be supported by other Arguments, we are not certain but the Command may be revoked, and the same Thing which was enjoin'd in one Age, be forbidden in another.

OF the Ritual Precepts in general it may be said, that they cannot be necessary and immutable, because they were not always required: And if the Faithful before *Moses*, were acceptable to their God without them, what should hinder but, if God see fit, the Faithful of future Ages may also find the same Acceptance? Of many of them, it is moreover certain, and allowed by *Jewish* Writers themselves, that they had Respect to such Customs and Usages of other Nations, as are now sunk and buried in Oblivion: And if then the Ground of their Prescription ceases, can it be any Reflection on the Divine Wisdom, or Argument of Mutability in God, that the Prescription it self, which stands on that Foundation, should cease and be abrogated with it? Lastly, it will appear that they were meant to introduce the *Gospel* Dispensation, and did many of them figure out the Benefits and Privileges of it. But when the Substance came in view, it was but fit the Figures should be drawn off. It was no Dishonour to them to be superseded; they were confess'd good in their time, they were useful

^a Prefat. in Aboth. c. 6. apud Surenhus.

^b Limborch. Amica Collat.

Berriman. useful and significant; and tho' they had not the same intrinsic Goodness with
Sermon the moral Precepts, yet *Nehemiah* joins them together, and observes that when
XIX. God came down on Mount Sinai, and spake with them from Heaven, he gave
Neh. them right Judgments, and true Laws, good Statutes and Commandments. So
ix. 13. that I should not apply to them that Passage of *Ezekiel*, as some have done,
Ezek. Wherefore I gave them also Statutes that were not good, and Judgments whereby
xx. 25. they should not live. Which appears as well from the Context of the Place,
Acts as from the *Targum* of *Jonathan*, and *St. Stephen's* Oration in the New Testa-
vii. 42. ment, to relate not to the Delivery of the Law, but to the People's being de-
Deut. liver'd over afterwards to the Practice of Idolatry.
x. 16.

UPON the whole, we may conclude that the Goodness which was in them was transient and occasional, that they were prescribed for temporary Purposes, and the Reasons upon which they were founded are not constant and immutable. As God did not require them from the Beginning, so there were no Inducements to believe he would require them to the End; but it might reasonably be expected that whenever the ground of the Injunction should cease, (of which he to be sure is the only proper Judge) then he would also cease to exact the Observation of it. But,

(2.) SECONDLY, to push this Argument a little farther, I observe that some of the *Mosaick* Rites are explain'd, in the Old Testament it self, to have an inward and spiritual Meaning; from whence I apprehend it is a clear consequence, that the Matter which was chiefly intended, was not the outward Observation of the Rite prescribed, but that principal regard was had to something of a different kind, which was figured and denoted by it, something which was not less necessary before the Prescription of that Rite; and as it then subsisted, so it may continue, altho' the external Rite should be abolish'd by the same Authority that enjoin'd it.

LET us see how this stood in the Case of *Circumcision*. There was an outward Rite prescribed, which was not necessary till it was commanded: But it betoken'd an inward Disposition which has been always necessary, and must be so unalterably, as long as human Nature is tainted with Corruption and compass'd with Infirmary; namely, the mortifying and casting off of vicious Appetites and Inclinations. It is so explain'd by *Moses* himself, when he says in *Deuteronomy*, *Circumcise the Foreskin of your Heart, and be no more stiff-necked*; and promises the Divine Aid and Assistance to that purpose—*The Lord thy God will circumcise thine Heart, and the Heart of thy Seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine Heart, and with all thy Soul, that thou mayst live.* To the same purpose speaks the Prophet *Jeremy*; *Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the Foreskin of your Hearts, lest my Fury break forth like Fire, and burn that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings.* From whence it is usual both in the Law and Prophets, for them, whose vicious Appetites and Affections are not in this manner subdued and mortified, to be described under the Character of *uncircumcised in Heart or Ear*. So that it is no new Paradox which we meet with in the *Christian* System, that we are circumcised with the *Circumcision* made without Hands, in putting off the Body of the Sins of the Flesh; that we are the *Circumcision* which worship God in the Spirit, and have no confidence in the Flesh; that the obstinate and unbelieving Jews are upbraided by *St. Stephen* with being *uncircumcised in Heart and Ear*; that he is said, by *St. Paul*, not to be a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that *Circumcision* which is outward in the Flesh, but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and *Circumcision* is that of the Heart, in the Spirit and not in the Letter, whose Praise is not of Men, but of God.

So likewise in the Case of *Sacrifice*, and other ritual Observances^d, it was the inward Principle of humble and dutiful Obedience which made them acceptable;

^c See *Scripture Vindicated, in answer to Christianity as Old, &c.* par. 3. pag. 104, &c.

^d See *Jenkins's Reasonableness of the Christian Religion*, Vol. 2. c. 15.

acceptable; and the outward Observance, when separate from that, is rejected as vain and insignificant. *Hath the Lord as great Delight in Burnt-Offerings and in Sacrifices, as in obeying the Voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than Sacrifice, and to hearken than the Fat of Rams. Offer unto God Thanksgiving, the inward Affection express'd by Eucharistical Oblations: This also shall please the Lord, better than a Bullock that hath Horns and Hoofs. The Sacrifices of God are a broken Spirit, the deepest Remorse and Compunction of the Soul, more acceptable to him than the slaying of Beasts. And where that was wanting, to what purpose is the Multitude of your Sacrifices unto me, saith the Lord?—Bring no more vain Oblations, Incense is an Abomination unto me, the new Moons and Sabbaths, the calling of Assemblies I cannot away with—wash ye, make you clean, cease to do evil, learn to do well, &c.*

THE Prophet *Jeremy* has spoken of this Matter in such Terms, as if the use of *Sacrifices* had not been at all prescribed—I spake not unto your Fathers, nor commanded them in the Day that I brought them out of the Land of Egypt, concerning Burnt-Offerings or Sacrifices. But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my Voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my People. Upon which Passage *Maimonides* moves a Difficulty, how this Declaration may be reconciled with Fact, since nothing can be plainer than that God did prescribe the use of *Sacrifices* upon their coming out of Egypt, and that the Rules concerning them, do make a principal Part of the Body of the *Mosaick* Precepts. His Solution of the Doubt is right in the main, tho' it consists not well with his own Opinion of the perpetual Obligation of those Precepts. It amounts in short to this^e, that the first Intention or Design of the Law, was to secure the Belief and Worship of one God, and that what relates to these ritual Observances being only of a secondary nature, not instituted for its own sake, but for the better securing of the first and great End, is spoken of as if it had not been prescribed at all, in comparison of the other, which was the thing principally designed, and had in view even in those Prescriptions.

It may be added, that these *Sacrifices* are not expressly mention'd in the original Covenant between God and the People at Mount *Sinai*, but only a general Stipulation for Obedience. After which, these are not mention'd in the first Place, but the moral Precepts of the *Decalogue* come first, and the ritual Injunctions afterwards. Sacrifice was then prescribed in consequence of this Covenant; but the thing directly engaged for, was Obedience, which did virtually oblige them to the use of *Sacrifice*, when once it was prescribed. The Covenant it self indeed was ratified by *Sacrifice*, perform'd agreeably to the ancient Patriarchal Rites in use before the Time of *Moses*; but that was no proper or essential Part of the Covenant, but only the Method of ratifying and confirming it.

Now tho' it cannot from all this be argued, that the Institutions of this kind may be neglected at Men's own choice and option, so long as the Precepts requiring them continue in force; yet it may be certainly concluded, that they are alterable in their own Nature, and may be changed or abolish'd at the Pleasure of the Law-giver. He acts indeed upon the highest Reason and Wisdom, from whence we may be sure that there were good grounds for their being once instituted. But if the great End and View, which was serv'd by them at first, may be secured afterwards, in another manner, more effectually; here is then the same Reason and Wisdom in abrogating them, as there was in appointing them before. But,

(3.) THIRDLY, Our next Argument will rise higher, and shew that this was not only a possible or likely Case, but that in fact the *Mosaick* Institutions were so peculiarly adapted to the People and Tract of *Canaan*, that many of them must be utterly impracticable under the Reign and Discipline of the *Messiah*, whose Kingdom was to extend over the whole World.

^e Maimon. More Nevoc. par. 3. cap. 32.

Berriman.
Sermon
XIX.

Exod.
xix. 5.

Zech.
xiv. 9.

Eph.
ii. 14.

Numb.
x. 10.
—xxviii.
11, 14.
Lev.
xxiii. 24.
Numb.
xxix. 1.

Psal.
lxxxi.
3, 4.

IT has been observ'd in general of the ancient Rites, that they were given for a Mark of Distinction between the *Israelites* and other Nations, to keep them as a select People or Body of Men, specially appropriate to God, and his *peculiar Treasure above all People*. But this Peculiarity must cease of Course, when all Nations became subject to one Sovereign and one Law; and there could be no need to separate the *Jews* from other People, in religious Respects, when all People should be incorporated in one Body with themselves. So that all should become *one Nation*, and have *one King* over them, *Jehovah* should be one, and his Name one. This therefore being the State of Things predicted in the days of the *Messiah*, it remains that the Law which serv'd for Separation must then expire, and that not only when all Nations should be actually admitted, but from the time that an Offer of Admission should be made them, which breaks down the *middle Wall of Partition*, and cuts off all Pretence for national Distinctions. Accordingly it is observable, that many of the legal Institutions were plainly adapted to the *Jews*, consider'd as Inhabitants of *Canaan*, and making an entire Body, distinct and separate from other Nations. And as they could not be properly observ'd by themselves, when dispossest'd of that Country; so much less could they extend to oblige all Nations, when converted and made subject to one common Law with them.

To illustrate this Matter in a few Instances: The *New Moon*, or first Day of every Month, was required to be observed with the *blowing of Trumpets*, and the offering of solemn Sacrifices. And this was yet more strictly enjoin'd on the first Day of *Tisri*, which being the beginning of the Year for some Uses with the *Jews*, tho' the seventh Month in other Respects, was more eminently distinguish'd as the *Feast of Trumpets*, and required to be celebrated with the Solemnity of other additional Sacrifices: to which the *Psalmist* refers in this Description — *Blow up the Trumpet in the New Moon, in the time appointed, on our solemn Feast-day; for this was a Statute for Israel, and a Law of the God of Jacob*. Now the Knowledge of this beginning of the Month depended on the Observation of the *Phasis* of the Moon at *Jerusalem*^f; and as their other Festivals were fixed to certain Days of their Months respectively, it follows that the Observation of them must depend upon this Knowledge of the *Kalends*, or the Term from which the Month began, which could be had only in *Judea*, or such Places as were near enough to have the notice convey'd. And how then can this consist with the universal Extent of the *Messiah's* Kingdom, when the People of all Nations are foretold to unite under him, and be subject to his *Law*?

AND as this creates a Difficulty in their monthly and annual Festivals, such as obliges them at this Day to observe two Days together for their *New Moons*, which could never be the Intention of the Law; so there is another to be observed in their weekly Festival of the *Sabbath*. The *seventh Day* to be kept holy was computed from the setting of the Sun on the sixth Day, to its setting again on the Day following. But surely this Law was never design'd to reach to every Country, since the Measure of Time can never be the same in all. At the same time that it is Noon in *Judea*, it is but Morning in *Britain*, it is Evening in *China*, and Midnight in *America*. So again, whereas the Days and Nights are nearly of an equal length between the Tropicks, they are in other Countries either longer or shorter at different Seasons of the Year, in proportion as they are nearer or more remotely situated. And in those Parts which are nearest to the *Poles*, the Sun remains either above or under the *Horizon* for several Months together, so as to make it either Day or Night continually. Now under this Variety, how should the *Sabbaths* or other Festivals be reduced to any certain Computation? The Law has plainly made no provision for this Exigence: from whence it is at least a reasonable Presumption, that the Law was only calculated for the Inhabitants of one Part of the World, and could not therefore be design'd for the Subjects of the *Messiah*, who should be spread over the whole Earth.

LET

^f Vid. Maimon. Kiddush Hachodesh.

LET us look again to their *Sabbatical* Year returning, answerably to the Weekly *Sabbath*, in a Course of seven Years, when the Land was to rest from Agriculture and Tillage, and by a Rotation of seven of which *Sabbatic* Years the grand *Sabbath* of *Jubilee*, or general Release, was regulated and adjusted. Now these Years were reckon'd to commence from the Tenth Day of *Tisri*, on the seventh Month, which answers mostly to our *September*, after the Fruits both of the Field and the Vineyard were got in, and about five Days before that Feast of *Tabernacles*, which was prescribed to be annually observed when they had gathered in the Fruit of the Land. By this Means the Fruits of the sixth Year were clearly got in, before that Rest or Cessation of the seventh, which the Law prescribed. But that could be the Case only in those Places where the Seasons keep the same Course as in *Judea*, where the Harvest and Vintage fall in or near the same Months, so that the regular Observation of *Sabbatic* Years and *Jubilees* might interrupt the Agriculture of their own time only, the sowing and gathering of one Year, and not by a different position of the Seasons hinder the gathering of what was sown some Months before, nor the sowing of that which was to be gather'd in the Months following. So that neither was this Law calculated for the whole World, since Summer and Winter cannot be the same in all Places, but in proportion as the Sun approaches nearer to one *Tropic*, he must of course remove farther from the other. And it is remarkable that this Law, tho' given to the *Israelites*, with the rest of the *Mosaic* Precepts, forty Years before their entring into *Canaan*, yet was not to take place till they had actual Possession of that Land of Promise.—*When ye come into the Land which I give you, then shall the Land keep a Sabbath unto the Lord.*

Berriman.
Sermon
XIX.

Lev.
xxv. 9.

Lev. xxiii.
34, 39.

Lev.
xxv. 2.

THE same Observation might be made in many other Cases, where the Law plainly considers them as Inhabitants of *Palestine*, and in consequence of that, prescribes such Rites as would not have been required throughout all Nations. Thus in the Case of the *Leprosy* of Houses, where the *Priest* was to go and view the Place infected, and perform the Rites of Cleansing on the very Spot, the Law is thus introduced — *When ye be come into the Land of Canaan, which I give to you for a Possession, and I put a Plague of Leprosy in a House of the Land of your Possession* — And it is observable that in many of those Places where their Rites are prescribed by an *Ordinance for ever*, there is this Limitation expressly added — *in your Dwellings, and throughout your Generations*, — as it were on purpose to restrain it to the time of their inhabiting the Land of *Canaan*.

Lev.
xiv. 34.

BUT to proceed; there were three annual Festivals, on which all the *Males* were obliged to appear before the Lord at *Jerusalem*, and offer according to their Ability respectively; namely, at the Feasts of *Passover*, *Pentecost*, and *Tabernacles*: the two first of which were at seven Weeks distance from each other, and the latter about four Months afterwards. Surely this Law was design'd for such as liv'd within a reasonable distance of *Jerusalem*. Surely it could not be meant that the Inhabitants of *Britain* and of *China*, of *Scythia* and the Southern Parts of *Africk* (to say nothing at this time of *America*) should be obliged to the perpetual Fatigue of tedious Journeys, to spend the whole Circle of the Year, the whole Circle of their Lives in Pilgrimage and Travel. How should domestick Cares at this Rate be provided for? How should the Publick Weal be secured or promoted? How should Arts and Sciences be studied and made to flourish? How should the common Business of Life be consulted and pursued; if all Men in the Universe were thus frequently gather'd to one certain Point of it, and required to leave their Countries and their Families? Or if we could overlook these great and manifold Absurdities, yet what was the *City* of *Jerusalem*, that it should receive or entertain such innumerable Multitudes? What was the *Temple*, or the *Altar* of *Burnt-Offering*, that such infinite Oblations should be admitted there? Who were the *Priests* and *Levites*, that they should attend such an immense Concourse of *Sacrifices*, and that Variety of Offices which would be incumbent on them? What were the Flocks and Herds

Deut.
xvi. 16.

Berriman.
Sermon
XIX.

Herds of *Judea*, that they should supply Victims enough for every one's Occasion? What were the Channels and Sewers of *Jerusalem*, that they should suffice to convey away the Blood?

AND yet after all, the Difficulty will increase, if it be remember'd that there were many other Occasions for repairing to the Temple to offer Sacrifice. Many were the Cases in which some legal Pollution, and Trespasses of various Kinds, obliged them to come and offer their Atonement: and even the Women after Child-birth were required to repair thither both with eucharistical and expiatory Sacrifices. These Prescriptions, which were difficult enough to be observ'd, even by the Inhabitants of *Canaan*, must needs appear not only extremely burdensome, but altogether impracticable, if required of the Inhabitants of all the Earth. From all this it is strongly argued by *Eusebius**, that the *Mosaick Law* could never be designed for the Discipline of the *Messiah*, whose Kingdom was to extend over the habitable World; and whose Subjects, for that Reason, could not be required, by an All-wise and Righteous Law-giver, to resort, in such Frequency and Numbers, to the City of *Jerusalem*. *Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right?* And can we then believe, that he would rigidly exact the Observation of such Rites as are utterly impossible, that he would require his People to desert their Families, or leave their Country desolate; that he would croud into one City of *Canaan*, much greater Numbers than could be contain'd in it, or than the Fruits and Produce of the adjoining Countries could possibly support? They who can imagine such Absurdities as these, will lose much of that Beauty and Comeliness, with which the Laws of God have always been display'd, will derogate greatly from that Wisdom of the divine Oeconomy, which is one very weighty and powerful Recommendation of Religion.

PERHAPS it may be argued against us, that the *Moral Law*, which is confessedly in force, is yet impossible to be perfectly observ'd, as well as the Ceremonial. And why then should that Impossibility, which cannot vacate the Obligation in one Respect, be judg'd to do so in the other? But who sees not, in this Case, the Distinction and wide Disparity? that the Impossibility of observing the *Moral Law* to Perfection, arises not from the Nature of the Law itself, but from the Corruption and Infirmary of Man; whereas the Impossibility of observing these ritual Usages in all Nations, arises from the Nature of the Rites themselves, without any Fault or Negligence of Men.

AGAIN, it may be said, that the *Jews* assert the Perpetuity of the *Law* as to themselves only, and do not extend it to the *Gentile* World. But it was shewn before that in the Days of the *Messiah*, the *Jews* and *Gentiles* were to be incorporated into one Body, and should then become subject to one *Law* and one Government. So that it is in vain to imagine this discriminating *Law* should be continued, when the difference of Nations, which gave ground for it, should be it self abolish'd. Either then the *Law* must be universal in its Obligation, or it must be superseded in the Days of the *Messiah*, whose Kingdom reaches over all. Besides that the Prophets (as we shall see hereafter) have made mention of *Priests* and *Levites* to officiate, of *Sacrifice* and *Incense* to be offer'd among all Nations: which, however inconsistent with the literal Prescriptions of the *Jewish Law*, and therefore necessary to be mystically interpreted, must argue at least that in the Day of *Messiah* there should but one *Law* and Worship be prescribed both for the *Jew* and *Gentile*.

LASTLY, It may be alledg'd that in such Cases as are utterly impracticable, God may see fit to relax the Rigour of his Laws, and dispense with the punctual Observance of them; and yet as to all other Matters, the Law may continue in full Force, and retain its ancient Obligation. But this is an arbitrary Resolution of the Difficulty, without any real Ground or Foundation in the *Law* it self. The Instances which have been mentioned, do make up a main Part of that Body of ceremonial Precepts, which is contained in the Books of *Moses*.

They

* Demonstr. Evang. lib. 1. Vid. & Spanhem. Dub. Evang. par. 3. Dub. 112. & Witf. Oeconom. For-
derum, l. 4. c. 14.

They are prescribed in the same strict and peremptory Manner with the rest. Berriman. Sermon XIX.
 They are many of them such Precepts as are enjoined by an Ordinance לעולם Deut. xxvii. 26.
 for the Age (or for ever, as it uses to be render'd) from whence the Jews (we have seen) do take their principal Argument of Perpetuity. And they are all of them included in that severe Sanction of the whole Law — *Curſed be he that confirmeth not all the Words of this Law to do them.* — What Reason is there then to imagine, that so great a Part of the ritual Precepts, should be dispens'd with and relaxed, tho' no such thing was intimated by *Moses*, or the following *Prophets*, which will not argue with greater Probability, that the whole was meant to be set aside or superseded, and no longer to remain in force? The Conversion of the *Heathen* World was a Case foreseen and foretold; and had it been design'd they should become subject to the rest of the *Mosaick* Precepts, it had been easy to have made a general Exception of such things as are impracticable, which would at the same time have strengthened and confirmed their Obligation to the rest. Since no such Exception has been made in the *Law*, it is too much for us to make it of our own Heads; it must be much more reasonable to conclude there is no need of it, because the whole System of ritual Ordinances is expired, and so the Objection of Impossibility is entirely removed and set aside. Upon this Foot we are able to defend the Honour and Consistency of the Divine Laws, the Harmony that is between them, the Order and Beauty of the whole Oeconomy. But they who would assert the perpetual Obligation of the legal Precepts, will have the Difficulty to account how such extraordinary, such impossible things should be prescribed, and yet no Provision be made to excuse or dispense with them in any Case.

THERE are other Arguments behind to the same Purpose, taken from the express Predictions that remain of some of the Principal *Mosaick* Rites to be alter'd or abolish'd, from the mention of *another Law* to be given by *Messiah*, different from the old one, and from the plain tendency of the ancient Rites to prefigure and introduce the *Gospel* Benefits: by all which it is argued, that the *Law* was not designed for an unalterable Dispensation, but was really subservient to that *Gospel Scheme*, which began to be proposed in Paradise, and was therefore to expire upon the fuller Discovery and Revelation of it. But enough has been said already for the present time, and the farther Prosecution of these Particulars must be left to another Opportunity.

SERMON XX.

The Principal Rites of the *Mosaick* Law foretold
to be abolish'd.

Preached *April* the 3d, 1732.

The Fourth SERMON on this TEXT.

JOHN i. 17.

*For the Law was given by Moses, but Grace and Truth came by
Jesus Christ.*

Berriman.
Sermon
XX.

IN order to evince the Abrogation or rather Expiration of the *Mosaick* Law, as far as it consists of ritual or ceremonial Institutions; I have already argued from these three Considerations, *viz.* (1.) From the Nature of those legal Precepts themselves, as not being founded in the Reason or Relations of Things, at least so far as that Reason and those Relations are discoverable by us, and so far only they may be urged as the Grounds of our Obedience. (2.) From that some of the *Mosaick* Rites are explain'd, in the Old Testament, to have an inward and spiritual Meaning, whereby it is implied that the Matter chiefly design'd was not the outward Observation of the Rite prescribed, but something of a different kind which was figured and denoted by it, something which was no less necessary before the Prescription of that Rite; and as it then subsisted, so it may still continue, altho' the external Rite should be abolish'd by the same Authority that enjoin'd it. (3.) From that they were so peculiarly adapted to the People and Tract of *Canaan*, that many of them must be utterly impracticable under the Reign and Discipline of the *Messiah*, whose Kingdom was to extend over the whole World. It remains now that I go on with such other Arguments as may be offer'd to the same purpose.

(4.) **FOURTHLY**, therefore we have express Predictions in the Old Testament, that some of the Principal *Mosaick* Rites should be alter'd or abolish'd. It may be worth the while to consider this Matter in three special Instances; namely, the Ark of the Covenant, the Priesthood, and the Sacrifices, which were such principal Parts of the *Mosaick* Discipline, and so essential to the Worship instituted by it, and many of them enjoin'd to endure for that *Age* or Period, which the *Jews* would have to be *for ever*; that if it should appear even these were design'd only for a temporary Duration, and were foretold to expire in the Advent of *Christ*, there can be little doubt of the rest of the
Levitical

Levitical Oeconomy, but that all its Rites were calculated for the same End, and were design'd to lose their Obligation at the same Juncture. For if those things were to expire, on which the Law has laid the greatest Strefs, and prescribed with greatest Solemnity; who will dispute but other Matters of less Importance, and dependant upon these, should of course meet the same fortune with the Principal, *i. e.* expire, or be abrogated with them?

Berriman.
Sermon
XX.

[I.] FIRST then, as to the *Ark of the Covenant*, the Prophecy of *Jeremy* is very remarkable — *In those Days, saith the Lord, they shall say no more, The Ark of the Covenant of the Lord: neither shall it come to mind, neither shall they remember it, neither shall they visit it, neither shall that be done any more.* That the Days here referr'd to, are the Days of the *Messiah*, does appear from divers Characters in the Context of this Place. The Union of the *House of Judah* with the *House of Israel*, the Mercy and Restoration promised to them both, their great Increase and Multiplication in the Land, the gathering of all Nations to them to the Name of the Lord, and the giving them *Pastors according to God's own Heart*, do all plainly speak that flourishing and universal Empire, which is all along assured to the Son of *David*.

Jer. iii. 16.

Now the *Ark of the Lord* was, as it were, “ the Center and Compendium “ of all legal Ceremonies, the Throne of God, exercising a peculiar kind of “ Jurisdiction, and the principal Symbol of the whole typical Covenant. ^b ” From whence it is usually styled the *Ark of the Covenant*, and had the Tables of the Covenant reposed in it, and the whole Law of *Moses* in the Side of it; as it is also styled the *Ark of the Testimony*, and the *Testimony* it self, testifying or bearing witness to the Covenant God had made with *Israel*, and being a standing Pledge or Ratification of the same. It was indeed the most remarkable Symbol of God's Presence in the *Jewish Church*, and amidst all the Pomp and Splendor of that Temple which was built by *Solomon*, there was nothing esteem'd more sacred than this, or regarded with a greater Veneration. The curious Art and Contrivance of the Workmanship, the prodigious Cost and Value of the Ornaments, the Overlayings of Gold, and the *Cherubim* that overshadow'd it, its being made the Repository of the *Decalogue* and situate in the most Holy Place; are all unquestionable Arguments of the particular regard paid to this sacred Utensil. But above all the rest, it is observable, that over this was the *Propitiatory* or *Mercy-Seat*, from whence God was used to shew himself propitious or gracious to his People, by his especial Residence, or Inhabitation of that bright Appearance, which the Holy Scripture calls the *Glory of the Lord*, but the *Jewish Writers* *Shechinah*, or the Habitation of the Divine Presence. From hence God was pleased sometimes by an audible Voice to give Answers suitably to the Exigencies of his People; and from hence indeed the *Tabernacle* had its Name, as being in a more especial sense the Habitation of the Deity, and Place of his peculiar Residence. For this reason the Prayers of the People were directed towards it, their Sacrifices and Incense were offer'd up before it; God is said to have dwelt in the *Tabernacle*,

Deut.
xxxii. 26.
Exod.
xxvi. 33.
Lev.
xvi. 13.

שכינה

מבשם

^b Vid. Witf. Oeconom. foed. l. 4. c. 14. §. 26.

^c It is much disputed among the *Jews*, whether there was only one *Ark of the Covenant*, and that made by *Bezaleel*, or whether besides that there was another made by *Moses*, according to *Deut. x. 1.* They who suppose two, reckon the first to have contained those *Tables of the Covenant* which were not broken, and to have remained in the midst of the Camp, and afterwards in other Resting-places, till it was fixed in the Temple built by *Solomon*: And the other they suppose to have contained the broken *Tables*, and to have been occasionally carried out into the Wars. But others have more reasonably judged, that the *Ark* made by *Moses* and by *Bezaleel* was the same; the one directing the Pattern, the other performing the Workmanship: and that it was not allowed to be carried out into the Wars, or to go before the People in their Journeys, but upon special Occasions, and by the Command of God; as at their first leaving *Sinai*, three Days Journey, to search out a Resting-place, *Numb. x. 33.* at their passing over *Jordan*, to take Possession of the Land of Promise, *Josh. iii. 3, &c.* and at the Siege of *Jericho*, *Josh. vi. 6.* We read also of its being brought out in the Days of *Eli*, *1 Sam. iv. 3, 5.* but that being done without any divine Warrant, met with ill Success. There is besides this some mention of an *Ark* brought out on other Occasions, *1 Sam. xiv. 18. 2 Sam. xi. 11.* but this is understood not to mean the *Ark of the Covenant*, which contained the *Tables of the Decalogue*, but another *Ark* or Chest which was made for the Convenience of carrying with them the sacred *Ephod*, with the *Urim and Thummim*, that they might be able to consult God on any sudden Emergency, *1 Sam. xxx. 7, 8.* Vid. Buxtorf. Exercit. 1. Historia Arcæ foederis, cap. 3.

Berriman.
Sermon
XX.

1 Sam.
iv. 22.

Tabernacle, and between the *Cherubims*, and when the *Ark* was taken by the *Philistines*, the *Glory* was thought to have departed from *Israel*. Upon all which Considerations the *Jews* scruple not to say, that the whole Levitical *Worship* was referr'd to the *Ark* and *Cherubim*, which were as the Heart and Lungs in the human^d Body.

BUT great and important as this Symbol was, we see the Prophet *Jeremy* foretold the Absence and utter Abolition of it; and this not as a Calamity, such as the taking of it by the *Philistines* was deem'd, and the final Loss of it at the Time of the *Babylonish* Captivity, but indeed as a Privilege and Note of happy Times; which argues that the Use of it should then be superseded, and Men might gladly go without the Shadow, when they had the Substance, that they should not only be without the Thing, but without all opinion of its Sanctity, insomuch that in the Prophet's Phrase they should *no more speak of it, no more remember it, neither should it come to mind, neither should they visit or seek after it, neither should that be done any more*. So that here is plainly no room for that Objection of the *Jews*, that the Abolition of the other Ceremonies cannot be inferr'd from the Absence of the *Ark*, because they continued to be necessary after the Captivity, although the *Ark* was wanting: since we do not argue merely from the Absence of that Utensil, but from the setting aside of any Value or regard for it, the putting it out of remembrance as of no longer use or significance; and all this mention'd as a Privilege or Note of Happiness. The Loss of the *Ark* at the time of the Captivity, might intimate there was a time to come when all the ritual Services should be abolish'd: but it was not then attended with the Circumstances here foretold by *Jeremy*; it was then *remember'd* with Honour and Respect, and the Loss of it lamented as a grievous Infelicity.

1 Sam.
iv. 3.

2 Chron.
vi. 41.
2 Chron.
xxxv. 3.

NOR have the *Jews* any better Refuge in that other Pretence, that this is not spoken of an utter Abolition of the *Ark*, but only in a certain^e Respect; namely, that *Israel* should meet with such a ready Submission of the Nations, that they should have no need, as formerly, to carry out the *Ark* into the Wars, and encourage themselves by that Symbol of the divine Presence with the Hopes of Victory. It does not appear that this was any original Design of the *Ark*: and tho' it might be sometimes carried out upon special Occasions, and by the express Command of God^f, yet the only Instance we read of it without such Authority, was that in the Days of *Eli*; and certainly the Success it met with upon that Occasion, could give but little ground for following the Example. Besides that, soon after, upon the Erection of the Temple in the Days of *Solomon*, the *Ark* was shut up in the most Holy Place, which is therefore significantly call'd the *RESTING-place of the Lord, and of the Ark of his Strength*. The *Levites* were then released from the Burden of carrying it any more upon their Shoulders, and it was never afterwards removed for its Place, till the Temple it self was raised and levell'd with the Ground. It must then be most absurd to imagine the Prophet should here foretel the Disuse of a Practice, which had been left off Ages before his own Time; and especially that he should do it with such earnestness and variation of Phrase, as cannot be understood to import less than an utter Abolition. Again,

[2.] SECONDLY, Another thing which was foretold in the ancient Scriptures to be changed or abolish'd, was the *Levitical Priesthood*; which will imply the consequential Abrogation of all that ceremonial Worship, that Train of ritual Observances for the sake of which the *Priesthood* it self was instituted and ordained.

THE most inattentive Reader of the Books of *Moses* can scarce forbear observing, that the Sacrifices, and Purgations, and many other Ceremonies of the Law,

^d Cozri par. 2. §. 26. Ita & R. Jehuda Muscat. apud Buxtorf. de Arca fœd. c. 15.

^e Menasse Ben-Israel Conciliat. in Levit. Q. 7.

^f See above, p. 747.

Law, were so inseparably annex'd and appropriate to the *Priestly* Office, that it was judg'd a Matter of very criminal intrusion for any others to usurp or intermeddle in them—that the *Levites* themselves were only appointed in some circumstantial Matters to attend (as it were) and wait upon the *Priests* in the Execution of certain inferior Offices; such as carrying the Ark upon their Shoulders, slaying the Victims, washing away the Blood, and the like; whilst the Importance of the Ceremony lay upon the *Priests*, and could not be legally or warrantably executed by any other hand—that, finally, this *Priestly* Office was most strictly and rigorously limited to a certain Line or Succession, viz. the Family of *Aaron*; so that no Person of any other Extraction could, consistently with the *Mosaick* Law, be called or qualified for that Station. From all this one cannot help concluding, that if this Order of *Aaronical Priesthood* was at any Time to cease or be abolish'd, then the Law which had enjoin'd it, and whose most material Precepts had so plain a connection and dependance on it, must of consequence expire with it, and lose its Force and Energy. This is the Argument of the Apostle, and it has a manifest cogency of Reason in it:—*The Priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the Law.*

Berriman.
Sermon
XX.

Heb.
vii. 12.

LET us see then what Proof we have from the Prophetick Scriptures that the *Priesthood* was to be changed or alter'd in the Days of the *Messiah*. The whole Office of the *Priesthood*, the *High Priesthood* in particular, was designed to figure out the Offices of *Christ*, who, as it was foretold by the Prophet *Zechary*, should not only sit and rule upon his Throne, but should also be a Priest upon his Throne. But yet there are such Circumstances in the Letter of the Institution, as could not consist with *Christ's* Investiture with that Dignity; which therefore is an Argument that the Litteral *Priesthood* must expire, when once the Spiritual one of *Christ* took Place.

Zech.
vi. 13.

THE most remarkable Passage to this purpose, is that from which the Author to the *Hebrews* has so strongly argued, in the 110th Psalm at the fourth Verse:—*The Lord hath sworn and will not repent, thou art a Priest for ever, after the Order of Melchisedeck.* I have already had occasion, in the Course of these Lectures, to observe that this Psalm was penn'd by *David*, and that the Person, whose Honour and Dignity is made the Subject of it, is no other than the *Messiah*, in whom the *Regal* and *Sacerdotal* Offices were to be united. And tho' the *Jews* have excepted to this Argument, that the word *Cohen* does not necessarily signify a Priest, but is sometimes applied to secular Princes, as when *Ira* the *Fairite* is said to be *David's Cohen*, his Prince, or Chief Ruler, and *David's* Sons, in general, are term'd *Cobanim*; from whence the *Targum* upon the *Psalms* would restrain it to that Signification in this Place: Yet I judge that Restriction must appear to be unreasonable, when it is consider'd that the word *Cohen*, if used in a Political Sense, is never put for the Royal Majesty of the King's Person himself, but at most for the next or chief after him. Since then the *Messiah* is clearly represented with the Character of Majesty, it remains that when the Title of *Cohen* is ascribed to him, it cannot be understood in the Political Sense, but in the Ecclesiastical, as it had been anciently ascribed to *Melchisedeck* King of *Salem*, who was also the Priest of the most high God.

2 Sam.
xx. 26.
—viii. 18.

Gen.
xiv. 18.

Now this Prediction, that the *Messiah* was to be a Priest, amounts to a clear Implication that the *Levitical Priesthood* was to be abolish'd, and no more in force. For by the Law of *Moses* no Priest could be admitted who was not descended of the Family of *Aaron* in the Tribe of *Levi*. But it was the indisputable Character of the *Messiah*, that he was to spring out of the Tribe of *Judah*, and of the Family of *David*. And therefore if he were invested with the *Priesthood*, the *Mosaick Law* must needs be set aside, which had so unalienably attach'd that Office to another Family, that when King *Uzziah* himself presumed to usurp it, the Indignity was severely reprehended by the *Priests*, and their Reprehension was warranted by the divine Vengeance. It

Berriman. appertaineth not (say they) to thee, Uzziab, to burn Incense unto the Lord, but
 Sermon XX. to the Priests the Sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn Incense: Go out of
 the Sanctuary, for thou hast trespassed, neither shall it be for thine honour from
 2 Chron. the Lord God. By all which we see with what Reason the Apostle has pointed
 xxvi. 18. his Argument to this purpose:—For he (says he) of whom these Things are
 spoken, pertaineth to another Tribe, of which no Man gave attendance at the
 Heb. vii. Altar; for it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah, of which Tribe
 13, 14. Moses spake nothing concerning Priesthood.

BESIDES, the Psalmist expressly refers him to another Order of Priesthood, and thereby clearly intimates the Insufficiency of the Order then subsisting to bring them to perfection. For (as the same Author to the Hebrews excellently argues) if Perfection were by the Levitical Priesthood, what further need was there that another Priest should rise after the Order of Melchisedeck, and not be called after the Order of Aaron? And again, It is yet far more evident: For that after the similitude of Melchisedick there ariseth another Priest, who is made, not after the Law of a carnal Commandment, but after the Power of an endless Life; i. e. who transmits not his Priesthood in Succession to others after him, but continues himself a Priest for ever: For so the Course of the Argument implies,—The Law maketh Men High Priests which have Infirmary, and admits a Succession of many Priests, because they were not suffer'd to continue by Reason of Death: But this Man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable Priesthood, and is consecrated for evermore. The Apostle also has laid stress on the Solemnity of the Expression, inasmuch as not without an Oath he was made Priest; which shews the Immutability of the thing, and the Perfection of his Priesthood above the legal. The Lord SWARE, and will not repent, Thou art a Priest for ever, after the Order of Melchisedeck.

AFTER this, we may the less wonder to find it mentioned by Isaiah, as the Privilege of the Gospel-Times, that God would take unto him Priests and Levites out of all Nations, not legal Priests and Levites (that imports a palpable Absurdity!) but such as might be proper Substitutes and Ministers of this great High-Priest, who was to be taken from the Tribe of Judah: We may the less wonder to read of an Altar to be erected in the midst of Egypt; nay, and that in every place Incense should be offer'd to his Name, which was limited of old to the Temple of Jerusalem. The Priests and the Levites, the Altar and the Incense here foretold, are called so by a Figure: But the very Translation of these Names to Persons and Places disqualified by the Law, implies the Dissolution of the Law that had ordain'd them. But,

[3.] THIRDLY, The Cessation of the legal Sacrifices will deserve to be more attentively consider'd by it self. It cannot be denied but these made up a great Part of the ceremonial Precepts, from whence the Name of Sacrifice is sometimes put to denote the whole Apparatus of the ritual Worship. And therefore if these were to cease and be laid aside in the Days of the Messiah, there can be little doubt but the whole Body of ceremonial Institutions would fall with them. Now that they were to expire, has been already argued from the Reason of the Thing, because they were limited to the Temple of Jerusalem, and therefore could never be attended by the Subjects of a Kingdom dispersed throughout the whole World. It is likewise a natural Consequence of what was said before, concerning the Abolition of the Aaronical Priesthood. For the principal End of that Institution, was to preside in the Offering of Sacrifice and Incense: But if the Priesthood it self must be abolish'd, it should seem that the Sacrifices were to be offer'd no more.

BUT the Method of my Argument at present requires me to produce some express Prediction, that the Sacrifice it self should be abolish'd. And such a one we meet with in the famous Prophecy of Daniel concerning the coming of the Messiah within seventy Weeks: That that Passage relates to the coming of
 Messiah,

Messiah, and is fairly applicable to no one else, I have already made appear in a Discourse by it self. And among other things there foretold to be done by him, it is expressly said — *He shall confirm the Covenant with many for one Week, and in the midst of the Week he shall cause the Sacrifice and the Oblation to cease.* The Covenant to be confirm'd by him, is reasonably understood to be that *new Covenant*, which we shall see hereafter was to be made in his Days, different from that which had been made of old with their Forefathers by the hand of *Moses*. And at the time of ratifying this *new Covenant*, he should *cause the Sacrifice and the Oblation* (the Rites established by the former Covenant) to cease, and be no more. This, being the time at which the Verse before had told us he was to be cut off himself, does aptly call to mind the Prediction of another Prophet, that *his Soul should be made an Offering for Sin*; and so ratifying this *new Covenant* with his own Blood, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot, a full and perfect Sacrifice for Sin, should of course put an end to those typical Atonements of the Law, whose whole Virtue consisted in shewing forth this future Sacrifice, and must be lost, or at an end, when once it had been actually offer'd.

Berriman.
Sermon
XX.

Dan.
ix. 27.

Iſa.
liii. 10.

I MAY have farther occasion to pursue this Argument hereafter. At present we may add, that the rending of the *Veil of the Temple*, at the Time of our Saviour's Crucifixion, gave a signal Testimony to the Expiration of the legal Mysteries; and the Destruction of the Temple in the same Age, where only Sacrifices could be offer'd by the Law, with the utter Dissolution of the whole Jewish Polity, and the baffling of all Attempts that have been made to restore the People, or rebuild their Temple ever since, has caused an actual Cessation of those bloody Sacrifices, that since their Significancy ceased at the Appearance of the Antitype, their Continuance might no longer be permitted.

THESE are the Instances which I thought fit to give out of the Predictions of the Old Testament, concerning some principal Matters of the Law, which were to be set aside or superseded in the Days of the *Messiah*. And to these it may be proper to add,

[4.] FOURTHLY, Some traditional Sentences deliver'd by the ancient Rabbins, which contain some Footsteps of a general Opinion received among them, that a great Alteration should be made in the Precepts of the Law. To this purpose is that Saying recorded of some of them, that *all Oblations* (except the *Eucharistical*) *shall cease in the future Age, the Age of the Messiah*. I stay not now to enquire what is here meant by *Eucharistical* Oblations, nor to examine the Reason why they are supposed to continue when the rest are abrogated. It may suffice at present to observe, that from hence it appears to have been the Opinion of some ancient Doctors, that many of the Sacrifices appointed by the Law, as well those which were offer'd in Purgation of some ritual Uncleaness, as those which were termed *Sin* or *Trespass-Offerings*, and that whither for private Persons or the Body of the People, were to be superseded in the Days of the *Messiah*, and no more in Use.

To the same purpose they have another Tradition, that *all Festivals shall cease, besides the Feast of Purim and the Day of Expiation*. There is no Reason to be given why these should be excepted, when all the rest were to expire, the Feast of *Passover* and *Pentecost*, of *Trumpets* and of *Tabernacles*, which were most solemnly instituted in memory of their Redemption out of *Egypt*, the Delivery of the Law from Mount *Sinai*, and other Wonders wrought in the Wilderness. And if the Law was to cease in these Particulars, which had so plain a tendency to preserve its Honour and Esteem, this cannot but greatly weaken the Obligation of its other Precepts, and affords a strong Presumption that they also should fall with them.

'TIS

כל הקר בנות כטלות לעתיד לבא התורה אינה בטלה שנאשלים תוודת לך Jalcut. ad
finem Ezræ, citante Vorstio, in not. ad cap. 13. Abarbanel. de cap. 11. pag. 59.
כל המעורים בטלים חוץ מפורים ויום הכפורים Vajikra Rabba apud Vorstium ut supra.

Berriman.
Sermon
XX.

Jer. xxii.
7, 8.

'T IS a very lame Evasion which *Abarbanel* has recourse to in this Matter, that the Tradition implies not an utter Abolition of the Festivalsⁱ themselves, but only an Oblivion of those Benefits, upon occasion of which they had been instituted; because the Deliverance to be wrought by the *Messiah* shall so far exceed all others, that the People of *Israel* will no more attend to the Remembrance of those Wonders which God wrought for them, when he brought them out of *Egypt*; according to that of the Prophet *Jeremy*, *They shall no more say, the Lord liveth, which brought up the Children of Israel out of the Land of Egypt: but the Lord liveth, which brought up, and which led the Seed of the House of Israel out of the North Country, &c.* This is a Solution neither applicable to the Case, nor consistent with it self, and therefore serves only to confirm the Truth which it so feebly opposes. It is not applicable to the Case, because the Tradition is express for the Cessation of the Festivals themselves. It is not consistent with it self, because the principal End of those Festivals (next to their typical Relation, which the *Jews* disown) was to preserve a grateful Memory of ancient Benefits; and therefore if those Benefits themselves should be forgotten, it will imply the Festivals to be no more in Use.

I KNOW not what can be replied to this, except it be, that the Deliverances wrought by the *Messiah* may happen, and the Ancients did believe^k they should, at the very Season of these Festivals; and then the Festivals themselves may be continued, but instead of being applied to the Commemoration of those ancient Deliverances, they shall be applied to those new and greater Deliverances wrought by the *Messiah* at the same Season of the Year. But I answer, that even this is inconsistent with the Continuance of the Law, which not only prescribes the Festival, and the Services peculiar to it; but likewise the express Commemoration of those ancient Deliverances, and that they should carefully instruct their Children from Age to Age in this Meaning of those Services. So that whilst the Laws prescribing them were set aside, they would then no longer be *Mosaick* Festivals. Or if that can be supposed to be fulfill'd by commemorating another Deliverance, this will greatly countenance our typical Exposition of the Law, and argue that its literal Prescriptions may mystically be referr'd to Matters of another Nature, and in future Times.

I SHALL mention but one Instance more, to shew that the ancient *Jews* expected an Alteration of the Law in the Days of the *Messiah*; and that is in respect of the Prohibition of Meats. *Whatsoever Creature is unclean in this Age, i. e. under the Mosaick Discipline, 'tis said, ' God shall make it clean in the Age to come*; insomuch that even *Swine's Flesh* shall be lawful to be eaten: which is therefore said to have its name from a Root that signifies to^m return or be brought back into use. Now whoever observes with what rigour the Law has enforced these Prohibitions, and how scrupulously the *Jews* have all along abstain'd from Meats forbidden, cannot but presage the Abrogation of the Law with these Observances; or in other Words, that before the eating these things can be deem'd lawful, the Law it self must be set aside which had forbidden them.

ABAR-

ⁱ Rosh Amana seu de cap. fid. c. 17.

^k This appears from the LXX Version of Jer. xxxi. (which is in them the xxxviii.) 8. where to those Words of the Prophet — *Behold I will bring them from the North Country, and gather them from the Coasts of the Earth* — those Interpreters have added this Character of the Time — *in iogru pasia, in the Feast of the Passover*. To the same purpose some have understood that of the Prophet *Micah*, (vii. 15.) *According to the Days of thy coming out of the Land of Egypt will I shew unto him marvellous things*. And when the Converts from *Heathenism* in the latter Days are required to keep the *Feast of Tabernacles* (Zech. xiv. 16, 17, 18, 19.) it has been thought to intimate that the great Deliverance of the Church should be effected at that Season of the Year. St. *Jerom*, in Mat. xxv. 6. mentions both a *Jewish* Tradition, that *Christ* was to come at Midnight after the Example of the *Egyptian Passover*, and likewise an *Apostolical* Tradition, that *Christ's* second Coming was expected before Midnight on *Easter-Eve*. And to this we may add what *Obadiab de Bartenora* mentions in his Comment on the *Mishna* (ad tit. Megillah, cap. 3. §. 5.) which is thus in *Surenhusius's* Translation: *Nam traditione tenemus quod resurrectio mortuorum fiet in festo Paschatis, & bellum Gog & Magog in festo Tabernaculorum.*

זה שאמר הכתוב יהיה מתיר אסורים כל הבהמה שנשמעת בעולם הזה הבה בטתהⁱ אותה לעתיד לבא Bereshith Rabba ad Gen. xli. 1. apud Raymund. Martin. Pug. Fid. par. 3. dist. 3. cap. 12. §. 1. Vid. & Galatin. de Arcan. Cathol. Verit. lib. 11. cap. 12. Vid. & Grot. de Verit. Relig. Christ. lib. 5. §. 9.

^m חזיר from חזר Vid. Galatin. ut supra.

ABARBANEL has suggested ^a two Solutions of the Matter, which appear to be nothing else but the wretched Refuge of a baffled Disputant, and do really betray the Cause which they so weakly defend. One is, that this may be understood, not of a total Abolition, but only of a temporary Suspension of these Precepts, that in case of some extream Necessity; the Distinction of Meats might be set aside or suspended for a time. But besides that the Law has made no such Provision for any Case whatever, and this is a Case not more to be expected in the Days of the *Messiah*, than in the Ages before him: Besides this, it is clearly mentioned as the Privilege of the future Age, to be free from such Restraints, and have all Meats restored to their primitive Indifference; which argues it not to be meant of any occasional Relaxation of the Law, but of a total Abolition.

Berriman.
Sermon
XX.

He suggests farther, that these Dispensations themselves being matter of Tradition, may be understood to be of the Substance of the Law, because the Law, taken in its whole Latitude, includes not only the Books written by *Moses*, but likewise those Precepts which were deliver'd by Word of Mouth, whereby the written Law is explain'd, and Rules laid down for amplifying or restraining it in time to come: and then such Restrictions taken from the Substance of the Law, ought not to be reckon'd Contradictions to it. But till the Authority of this *Oral Law* is establish'd, and the way shewn for preserving it pure and uncorrupt; it is too obscure and precarious a Principle to give us any real Satisfaction. Besides that in effect it vacates the whole *written Law*, to suppose it liable to Change and Alteration by that which is *unwritten*; which, how it may consist with the Honour of the Divine Oeconomy, and the Opinion they so stiffly contend for, of the Perpetuity of legal Rites, let them, who advance the Paradox, consider at their Leisure.

So far then we have observ'd some principal Rites of the *Mosaick Law*, which were expressly pointed out to be altered or abolish'd. And if then (to sum up all) the *Ark of the Covenant* was no more to be esteem'd of any Value or Significance: If the *Aaronical Priesthood* was to lose its Sanctity and Privilege: If the *Sacrifices* and *Oblations* of the Law were to cease and be no more: If the *Festivals* ordain'd by *Moses*, in memory of national Advantages, were no more to be observ'd: If the Distinction of *Meats* was to be wholly abrogated, so that all should be all alike *clean* or indifferent: What then can we think of the whole Body of the *Mosaick* Precepts, of which these made up so great a Part, and had the rest so clearly connected with them?

THE next Argument to be offer'd to the same purpose will be taken from the express mention of *another Law* to be given by the *Messiah*, different from the *old one*. But of that at another Opportunity.

^a *Rosh Amana*, cap. 13.

SERMON XXI.

A new Law to be given by *Messiah*, which was pre-figured by the old one.

Preached *May* the 1st, 1732.

The Fifth SERMON on this TEXT.

JOHN i. 17.

For the Law was given by Moses, but Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ.

Berriman.
Sermon
XXI.

I HAVE already argued for the Expiration of the ceremonial Precepts of the *Law* of *Moses* from these four Considerations, viz. (1.) From the Nature of those Precepts, not founded in the Reason, or Relation of Things. (2.) From the spiritual Explication that is made of some of them in the Old Testament it self. (3.) From their being many of them peculiarly adapted to the People and Tract of *Canaan*, whereas the *Messiah's* Kingdom was to extend over the whole World. And, (4.) from the express Predictions that occur in Scripture, of some of the principal *Mosaick* Rites to be alter'd or abolish'd: Which Argument was largely stated in the last Discourse, from the Instances of the *Ark* of the *Covenant*, and the *Aaronical Priesthood* and *Sacrifices*, besides some concurrent Fragments of Tradition, remaining to the same Purpose, concerning the legal *Oblations*, and *Festivals*, and Distinction of *Meats*. From hence I proceed now, in the

(5.) FIFTH place, to infer the same Conclusion from the express mention that is made of a *new Law* or *Covenant* to be given by *Messiah*, different from the *old* one which was given by *Moses*.

IT is insisted by some, that as the *Covenant* of the *Messiah* is a *Covenant* of Grace and Mercy, importing the Pardon of Iniquity, and the Justification of those who by the *Covenant* of Works are liable to Punishment, he cannot for that Reason in a proper Sense be term'd a *Law-giver*, which would import the Prescription of certain Terms of Duty, with the Sanction of Penalties annex'd to them. So that tho' there are Rules of Practice set before us in the Gospel, yet these are thought by such Persons not to be given properly under the Notion of a *Law*, in which view its Obligation must be fetch'd from the former *Covenant*, but proposed as the Result only of that gracious Aid and Assistance, which is vouchsafed us by the Spirit of *Christ*, to discharge such Obedience as
God

God will now accept by pardoning our Defects. And tho' again there are Penalties threatned to the Disobedient, yet this is consider'd, not as any thing introduced by the Gospel, but as the Remainder of the former *Law* or Covenant of Works, to the Curse and Condemnation whereof they are still expos'd, who, by neglecting the Motions of the Spiritual Life, do forfeit the gracious Terms and Conditions of the Gospel-Covenant. I should be loth to dispute about the use of a Word, if we can be brought to agree, in the main, as to our Notion of the Thing. And therefore, since the Dispensation of the Gospel is indifferently term'd in Scripture a *Law* or *Covenant*, I shall use those Terms promiscuously as I find them, and shall have enough from them, on either Scheme, to answer the Purpose of our present Enquiry. Withal it should be noted that the *Jews* themselves, how zealous soever for the Perpetuity of the *Mosaick Law*, have yet some Fragments of Tradition still among them, which speak of a *new Law* to be given by *Messiah*^a, and look upon all other Laws as *Vanity* in comparison of that.

THE Prediction of a *Prophet like unto Moses* has been formerly^b explain'd, and shewn to relate not to a *Succession* of *Prophets* thro' many Ages, to whom the Characters of that Prediction can never be ascribed, but to *one* single *Prophet* more eminent than the rest, which could be no other than the great and long-expected *Messiah*. At present it is material to remind you of that Part of the Prediction, where God promises to *put his Words into the Mouth* of this Prophet, that he might *speak unto them all that God should command him*, requiring the People to *hearken* unto him, and denouncing heavy Vengeance in case of their Neglect. The ground of this Prediction was that Terror and Amazement which had seized the People, when they heard God, with a tremendous Voice, delivering the *Ten Words* or *Commandments* from Mount Sinai, which moved them to petition, that he would no more speak to them in that Manner, but make known his Laws by the Ministry of *Moses*. They were not only gratified in this Matter of their Request, in that the Sequel of God's Laws was first deliver'd to *Moses*, and by him reported to the People, and introduced accordingly in this Style or Form of Expression — *The Lord said unto Moses, thus thou shalt say unto the Children of Israel*: but they were assured moreover that in time to come, another Prophet should arise, who should deliver all *God's Words* in the same easy and familiar manner, and he would no more interpose with that awful Pomp and Solemnity which he had used in the pronouncing of the *Decalogue*. This carries an Intimation that the *Mosaick* Discipline would then have reach'd its Period, that till then the Words spoken by *Moses* would be the standing Rule for the Direction of the Church, but then there would be occasion for another Prophet to deliver anew the *Words* or *Will* of God; and tho' the substantial Parts of Duty are fixed and unalterable, yet they might be proposed or enforced after another Manner, and taught with greater Perspicuity.

PARTICULARLY it deserves to be remember'd that the *Mosaick Law* was deliver'd only to the *Hebrew Nation*. *Hear, O Israel*, was the Style of *Moses*: and *the Lord our God*, was the Title by which they distinguish'd the true Deity from all others, as appropriate to themselves. But as the Kingdom of *Messiah* has been shewn to extend over the habitable World, so it is expressly noted by the Prophet *Isaiab*, that his *Law* or Discipline should reach to other Nations — *and the Isles* (says he) *shall wait for his Law*, i. e. those Parts of the World which were most difficult to come at, and to which they were used to travel by Sea from *Judea*, shall attend to his Doctrine, receive his Institutions, and submit themselves to his Authority. Now tho' this does not import any Alteration in the substantial Parts of Duty, which must be eternal as those Relations upon which they are founded, and that Divine Sanctity to which they are conformable; yet it cannot but import a material Change in the outward Oeconomy or Method of Dispensation, when the Divine Law should reach to those who seem'd

^a Vid. Raymund. Martin. Pug. Fid. par. 3. dist. 3. cap. 20. Item Vorstii Annot. ad Abarbanel de cap. Fidei cap. 13. pag. 59.

^b Serm. VIII.

Berriman. seem'd to have been disregarded, and be propos'd without those Circumstances
 Sermon of Terror and Amazement, which attended the Delivery of the *Decalogue*
 XXI. from Mount *Sinai*.

Jer. xxxi. ANOTHER remarkable Passage to this Purpose, is that of the Prophet *Je-*
 31, 32, *remy*, which is strongly urg'd in the Epistle to the *Hebrews*. *Behold the Days*
 33, 34, *come, saith the Lord, that I will make a NEW Covenant with the House of Israel,*
Heb. viii. *and with the House of Judah, not according to the Covenant which I made with*
 8, &c. *their Fathers, when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the Land of E-*
gypt, the which my Covenant they brake, altho' I was an Husband unto them,
saith the Lord. But this shall be the Covenant that I will make with the House
of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my Law in their inward
Parts, and write it in their Hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my
People. And they shall teach no more every Man his Neighbour, and every Man his
Brother, saying, know the Lord; for they shall all know me from the least of them
unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their Iniquity, and
will remember their Sins no more.

THE mention of a *new Covenant*, as the Apostle argues, implies the other to which it is oppos'd, to be *old*, and growing out of date. Now that other plainly was not the Covenant of Works simply consider'd, which had been given to Man originally in the State of Innocence, and was quickly vacated by the Covenant of Grace made with him after his Apostasy. But it was the *Sinaitical* Covenant, made between God and *Israel*, after their coming out of *Egypt*; and this consider'd as an outward Rule, confirmed by typical Sacrifices and the sprinkling of Blood, and containing as well ritual as moral Precepts, to the punctual discharge of which the People had oblig'd themselves, by saying, *All that the*
Exod. *Lord hath said, we will do, and be obedient.* If this be taken with a view to the
xxiv. 7. inward Meaning and Design of the whole, it will then be understood to refer to that Covenant of Grace, which took Place (as was said) from the time of Man's Apostasy, and is the only Method of Acceptance with God, under every Oeconomy or Dispensation. But when it is consider'd literally, for a rigorous Prescription of outward Precepts on the one hand, and an Engagement for the strictest Obedience on the other; it is then a distinct thing from the Covenant of Grace, and properly oppos'd to it. And so it must be taken by the Prophet in this Place, because the *new Covenant* is expressly set in opposition to the *Covenant made with their Fathers*: Which shews the Absurdity of those *Jewish* Expositors,* who will not allow the Introduction of a *new Law* to be here intended, but only a Confirmation of the old one. The inward Part of the Law is unalterably the same in all Ages: But the outward Method and Circumstance of prescribing it, was alterable; and so the *Law of Moses* must give place to that of *Christ*.

THE Covenant therefore, propos'd with all its inward Force and Efficacy, and without the cover of ritual Precepts and Injunctions, is the *new Covenant* here mention'd to be *written in our Hearts*, to convey the clearest Knowledge of Divine Truths, and contract for Pardon and Forgiveness. And so it is plainly distinct from the *Mosaick* Covenant (which was the old one) if literally taken, as consisting of external Rites and Ordinances.

NOT that they who lived under the former Dispensation were entirely destitute of the Benefits of this *new Covenant*. We have before observ'd^d, that it took place from the time of Man's Apostasy, and was, in different manner and proportion, notified thro' all Ages of the World. The several Dispensations of Providence were only subservient to this gracious Covenant, and the *Mosaick Law* it self, so far from rivalling or contradicting it, that it was meant to convince Men of the need, and display the excellency of it. But whilst the *Jews* were apt to rest in the Letter of the *Sinaitical* Covenant, without attending to this inward and spiritual Design of it, and look'd to be justified by an external

* Kimchi in *Jer. xxxi. 31.* apud Vorstium in *Abarb.* pag. 59.

^d See Sermon III, and IV.

nal Compliance with its Precepts, this gave Ground to distinguish it in that View, from the Covenant of Grace, and Justification by Faith in *Christ*, which was really (though more obscurely) contain'd and referr'd to under it. And therefore when this Covenant came to be display'd and manifested in a clearer Light, its Benefits propos'd without Ambiguity, its inward and spiritual Influence most expressly avow'd, without the cover of ritual and ceremonial Precepts: it is then aptly represented as a *NEW Covenant*, in respect of that former ritual and symbolical Dispensation, under which it lay conceal'd, and which the People had abused, to exclude and make it ineffectual.

THAT ritual Dispensation, as it stood literally ratified at Mount *Sinai*, made no express Promises of Grace and Pardon, but the People in their own names undertook for the exactest Obedience — *All that the Lord hath said, we will do, and be obedient*. But did they fulfil, and stand to this Engagement? I suppose no one will pretend it. And therefore the Prophet significantly adds, that *they brake* this former *Covenant*, they fail'd of the Obedience for which they undertook, and therefore wanted a more gracious Dispensation to assure them of the Pardon of their Sins, and convey such Supplies of spiritual Aid, as might help them to render such Obedience as God would accept, in and thro' the great Atonement made for their Defects. To which purpose the Prophet observes, that in the Days of this *NEW Covenant*, under the full and clear Manifestation of such Grace and Mercy, God would *put his Law in their inward Parts*, not *written*, as formerly, *in Tables of Stone*, but *in fleshly Tables of the Heart*, and extend to them so full a Pardon of their Sins, as even to blot out the Remembrance of them, and place them no more to their Account.

THERE were Atonements appointed by the Law for particular Trespasses, and ritual Pollutions. But there seems to have been none which extended to every sort of Violation, to the most aggravated kind of presumptuous Offences, or to an habitual Neglect and Disregard of the divine Laws: there seems to have been none particularly adapted to the main points of Immorality, but for the most part to Matters of a ritual Nature; whilst the Curse of the moral Law remained in Force, and must still have kept its Obligation, for any thing the *Mosaick Law* of it self could do to remove it: there seems to have been none for restoring them to Favour, who had vacated their Covenant by not keeping up to the Terms of those Rules which were prescribed them, according to the Tenor of their own Engagement — *All that the Lord hath said, we will do, and be obedient*.

THE Nature of the legal Atonements was such, that some Beast used to be substituted to suffer Death, instead of the Offender. But in cases of the grosser Immoralities, as well as those Offences that were committed against the ritual Law *בִּירְמָה* *with a high hand*, or *בִּירוֹן* *with Pride*, i. e. *presumptuously*, it was required, that the Offender should undergo the Penalty of Death in his own Person, without any Commutation, and therefore there was no Sacrifice admitted for him in such Cases; *Thou desirest no Sacrifice, else would I give it*, said *David*, when he lay under the Guilt of Murder and Adultery. The want of Witnesses, the Iniquity of the Times, or other Circumstances, might often hinder the actual Execution of the legal Severity. But still the Offenders in this Sort, remained liable to the Sanctions of the Law, and might be cut off by the secret Stroke of divine Vengeance: Their Offences, at least, were unexpiated, and unatoned, and without any express Promise of Forgiveness in the Law it self.

THERE is nothing looks like an Overture of Pardon for such Offences, except it be the yearly Expiation made, in behalf of the whole Assembly, on the great *Day of Atonement*, which is represented as designed to expiate *all the Iniquities of the Children of Israel, and all their Transgressions in all their Sins*. Where there is no question, but, as the Slips of Ignorance or Inadvertency do come under the name of *SINS*, so there are wilful and premeditated *Sins* includ-

Berriman.
Sermon
XXI.

ed ; both Sins of actual Commission, contrary to the Prohibitions of the divine Law, and meant here by the name of INIQUITIES, or perverse Actings, and likewise Sins of Omission, or Neglect of the divine Commands, called here TRANSGRESSIONS, or Prevarications of the Law, evading the Force of express Precepts and Injunctions. But then, this perhaps might reach only to such Sins as were consented to in compliance with some strong and sudden Impetus of Passion or Appetite, and forsaken again ; it might not extend to such Sins as were done *with Pride and a high Hand*, the Authors of which, are by the Law directed to be cut off without any Expiation ; and therefore it may be thought there should no Benefits accrue to these Persons from the *Day of Atonement*, who, if the Law had been duly executed, must no longer have been Members of the Congregation. Or if the Benefit did reach to such Persons, yet still it was nothing but the outward Privilege which could be given by the Law, and only typical of that Salvation which is proposed to us by the Gospel. For this is the Point which deserves, above all, to be remembered upon this Argument, that the Atonements of the Law themselves were but *ritual or symbolical* Atonements. They had an outward and symbolical Effect, in restoring to the Privilege of Church Membership : but they had no inward Efficacy of their own, as pertaining to the Conscience ; and whatever Effect of that sort may seem to be ascribed to them, can be reasonably understood only in their typical Relation, as they served to figure out, and apply, in some sort, to faithful Men, the Benefits of that future, perfect Sacrifice of the new Covenant, which according to this Passage of the Prophet, was to procure the real Pardon and Forgiveness of Sin. And the mention of this aptly leads me to the

[6.] SIXTH and last Argument that was proposed, to shew that the Obligation of *Mosaick* Precepts was never meant to be perpetual : and that is taken from the plain Tendency of the ancient Rites to prefigure and introduce the Gospel Benefits. This is to be shewn under the next Head, in a Variety of Instances. At present I attend only to the Reasonableness of the Conclusion, which I suppose may be cleared up in very few Words. For if it be allowed that the Body of *Mosaick* Precepts was calculated to point out the Method and Oeconomy of our Redemption by *Christ*, we shall (I judge) have no Difficulty to make good the Consequence, that since *Christ* has appeared in Person, and performed all that the *Law of Moses* had foreshewn concerning him, the Figures that foreshewed him may well be set aside, as of no longer Use or Significance ; that being now more plainly shewn in Fact and Verity, than could be possibly done before, by distant Adumbrations.

THIS is part of the *Antithesis*, which has been stated from the Text. The *Law* was given by *Moses*, which contained typical or figurative Representations, to foreshew or shadow out what was afterwards to be effected : But that *Verity* or *Truth* it self, which had so been figured out, *came* in due time, or was *effected* by *Jesus Christ*. What need then any longer to teach that obscurely, which was now so clearly and openly proposed to common Observation ? What need of the fainter Light of Torches or Candles, to them who have the Sun shining in his full Strength, and enjoy the Benefits of open Day ? The ritual Shadows gave some distant Notice of the Gospel Benefits, and supplied in some tolerable Measure, the want of clearer Revelation. But since those Truths themselves have been clearly revealed, and actually dispensed to the Faithful in *Christ Jesus* ; should we still contend for veiling them with ancient Shadows, and labour to retain that in a weaker and obscurer Manner, which we have already in the most bright and efficacious ? Surely this would be to vacate the Grace and Efficacy of the Gospel Scheme : and I persuade my self this Argument concludes so strongly for the Abolition of the legal Rites, that they who are disinclined to such Conclusion, will, in order to get rid of it, be forced to deny the Premises. And accordingly, 'tis certain that they who contend most pertinaciously for the

the perpetual Observation of them, do not admit that they were instituted for this End, to point out future Benefits of a sublimer Nature, but rather rest in them for their own Sake, and look to be justified by a regular Observance or Obedience to them. This is the avowed Principle of the *Jews*, and utterly inconsistent with the Belief of *Christianity*. Against this therefore St. Paul, in his Epistles, has set himself with great Earnestness: And that I may effectually overthrow this fundamental Error, I proposed it as the

Berriman
Sermon
XXI.

III. THIRD general Head of Discourse upon this Subject, to point out and explain how the *Law* did prepare the way for the *Gospel*, by its Types and Pre-figurations, which foreshewed the Office and Character of the *Messiah*, and made such Application of his Benefits, as was suited to that Age of the World, and proportioned to the Faith and Sincerity of its Observers.

AND that what I have to offer upon this Subject may be proposed and digested in the clearest Manner I am able, I would choose to treat of it under three Particulars.

1. I WOULD enquire what Grounds may be assigned for this typical Interpretation of the ancient Rites, as prefigurative of the Gospel Mysteries.
2. I WOULD remove the principal Difficulties and Objections that may seem to lie against this Method of Interpretation. And then,
3. I WOULD shew, under some obvious Instances, how apt and natural this Method of Interpretation is, and with what Beauty and Significancy it displays and unfolds to us the ancient Institutions.

I. FIRST I would enquire what Grounds may be assigned for this typical Interpretation of the ancient Rites, as prefigurative of the Gospel Mysteries. And these are taken — partly from the ancient Usages of other Nations, to instruct by Symbols and figurative Declarations — partly from what has already been observed of the *Jewish* Discipline, as plainly calculated to keep up the Expectation of a promised Deliverer, as having no other common End assignable for its numerous Prescriptions, as actually explaining some of the Rites which it prescribes, to an inward and spiritual Meaning. — And lastly, from the uniform and harmonious View which it appears to have upon the *Christian* Exposition, and that weighty Confirmation which is given to it by the Miracles and other Evidences of the New Testament. I should speak a little briefly to these several Particulars. And,

(I.) FIRST, For the ancient Practice and Usages of other Nations: It is well known to those who are conversant in ancient Writings, that whilst Arts and Sciences were engrossed by very few Hands, and the Attainment of Learning and Knowledge was a rare Felicity, it was usual for those of stronger Heads, and deeper Penetration, to convey their Instruction into vulgar Minds, under the Cover of Fables, or parabolical Allusions; and rather by symbolical and *hieroglyphical* Representations, than in the more naked and simple Method of literal Exactness, to express their theological and moral Sentiments. It is but little material to our present Inquiry where this Practice had its Rise, whether among the People of God, or among *Heathen* Nations; tho' from the Practice of Sacrificing, so early introduced, immediately after Man's Apostasy, I make little doubt, for my own Part, that its Original was truly divine. And tho' it was usual with the Devil, to mimic the divine Institutions, in the *Heathen* Ceremonies, and then make them subservient to some base and unworthy Design, by mixing a great deal of Falshood and Imposture with them; yet we are able to assign such Grounds of this Method of Oeconomy, as are not unworthy of God, nor unsuitable to the ancient State and Condition of his Church. So that without pretending to vindicate what lay concealed in *Heathen* Mysteries, we may reasonably argue from them for the Method of Instruction, and conclude

Berriman.
Sermon
XXI.

clude that what was done among them, not always for the Service of Truth, the same Procedure, under the Influence of Revelation, might be directed to worthier and better Ends.

Luke
x. 21.

To teach Men Humility, and to exercise their Industry, are no inconsiderable Ends of Religion, and yet such as were properly consulted by involving its Doctrines in such degree of Obscurity, as might shew them the Weakness of human Faculties, with the need of Study and continual Application. Again, there were some considerable Points in the Scheme of our Redemption, which were to be brought about by the Crimes and Wickedness of free Agents. And as an open Discovery of these Matters, might have tended rather to frustrate and defeat them, so neither was it fit that the Depths of the divine Counsels should be proposed to Persons of such carnal and malicious Affections, as would have been apt to scoff and ridicule them. And therefore, although these Mysteries were in some measure discoverable by Men of humble Minds and earnest Industry, yet it is no wonder if they who were slack and superficial in their Enquiries, or had no true Relish of spiritual Knowledge; if they, whose Affections were so averse from God, that he would chuse to conceal and hide himself from them, should be wholly unacquainted with these wondrous Things of the divine Law, and remain ignorant of those Truths which are no ways suited to their Taste and Relish. *Father, I thank thee, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent; from the crafty Schematists in worldly Policy, and the opinionated Enquirers after deep Philosophy, and revealed them unto Babes, to such as are free from Guile and Hypocrisy, and cloathed with the Humility and Innocence of Children.* It seems as if not only the Jews and their Rulers, but even the Devil himself, with all the Powers of Darkness, were ignorant of the true Meaning and Purport of the ancient Prophecies, when they fulfilled them in compassing the Death of our Redeemer^e.

AND if thus it appears worthy of God, under the Covering of Types, and ænigmatical Descriptions, to conceal his Mysteries from the wicked and incorrigible Opposers of his Laws; it may be added on the other hand, that such Method of Instruction, so far as it was understood and explained, was fitted to make a stronger Impression upon vulgar Minds, which would better understand what was represented before them, by some visible Symbol, than if it had only been foretold in simple Terms as future, at a great distance. It is true, the Completion of all under the Gospel Light, has more evidently display'd the Order and Beauty of the whole Scheme; but whilst the Events were treated of as future, and in so covert a manner, that free Agents might not be hinder'd from bearing their Part in them, the Addition of outward Signs and Figures was of use, to create some Idea of the Benefits intended, though less clear and accurate than might reasonably be looked for as the Happiness of After-times, when the Thing it self should be actually effected. We see, by the Use of Fables to instruct Children, that figurative Descriptions are judged to make a strong Impression upon tender Minds; and therefore it is no wonder if

^e Καὶ ἔλαθε τὸν ἀρχὸν τοῦ αἰῶνος τῆς ἡγεμονίας τῆς σαρκὸς, ὃς ὁ τοκοῦτος αὐτοῦ, ὁμοίως ὡς ὁ θάνατος τοῦ κυρίου. Ignat. Epist. ad Ephes. §. 19. The same thing is asserted after him by many of the Fathers; *vid.* Coteler. Annot. ad loc. So they seem to have understood that Text of the Apostle, 1 Cor. ii. 7, 8. where he terms the Gospel the Wisdom of God in a Mystery, ἡ σοφία τῶν ἀρχόντων τοῦ αἰῶνος τῆς σαρκὸς, which none of the Princes of this World, or Age, knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified (i. e. caused to be crucified) the Lord of Glory. The Devil is elsewhere called, ὁ ἀρχὸν τοῦ κόσμου τῆς σαρκὸς, The Prince of this World, Joh. xii. 31. and xiv. 30. and xvi. 11. and, ὁ θεὸς τοῦ αἰῶνος τῆς σαρκὸς, The God of this World, or Age, 2 Cor. iv. 4. and, ἀρχὸν τῆς ἐξουσίας τοῦ αἵματος, The Prince of the Power of the Air, Ephes. ii. 2. And the apostate Angels in general are termed ἀρχαί, and ἐξουσίαι, and κοσμοκράτορες τοῦ σκότους τοῦ αἰῶνος τῆς σαρκὸς, Principalities, and Powers, and Rulers of the Darkness of this World, or Age, Ephes. vi. 12. From all which arises an apt and natural Interpretation of the Text first mentioned, that the Devils were not let into this Mystery of the Method and Design of our Redemption by the Death of Christ; and that if they had, they would never have used their Endeavours (as they did) to effect it. *Vid.* Estii Comment. in loc. Though other good Expositors (See Hammond and Whitby) have chose to understand it of the Rulers of the Jews, as committing this Sin through Ignorance, according to that of St. Peter, Acts iii. 17. And now, Brethren, I wot that through Ignorance ye did it, ὡς ἄγνοοι ὡς οἱ ἀρχαὶ τοῦ κόσμου, as did also your Rulers.

if the Church, in its Minority or infant State, whilst less capable of noble and sublimer Speculations, should be trained up in such Rudiments as these, and wait till its State of Manhood and Maturity, for the fuller Manifestation of those Truths, which could not be so easily apprehended, without the Covering of outward Symbols, till the Time of their Accomplishment.

Berriman.
Sermon
XXI.

THESE then might be the Grounds for dispensing typical Institutions in the ancient Church: and so far as the Meaning of those Institutions can be fixed and settled, they will have altogether the same force, in arguing for those future Events to which they referred, and which they were designed to figure out; (I say, they will have altogether the same force) with those Prophecies which are delivered in express Words. The only use of Words, is to stand as the Signs of Ideas; and if Types and Figures are understood, and allowed to signify the same Ideas, where will be the difference, in point of Certainty, between those Predictions which are delivered only under Signs and Symbols, and those which are expressed in Words? The former may be reckoned more obscure, because their Import is not so generally known, nor universally agreed on: But when once their Meaning is fixed and determined by certain and indubitable Tokens, then the Argument from them is as cogent as the other, and concludes with equal Strength and Solidity.

IT was upon this Foot I advanced, that the Law of *Moses* was a standing Prophecy of the *Messiah*; inasmuch as the Rites and Ceremonies ordained and prescribed by it, were generally calculated to point out the several Parts of his Office and Character, with the Benefits or Privileges to be procured and conferred by him. So far as this View and Drift appeared to those who waited for the Redemption in *Israel*, to the humble and sedate Enquirers after the Knowledge of divine Truth; so far, without doubt, it had as much Force and Efficacy, perhaps in some respects it might appear with greater Life and Vigour, than the more plain and simple Method of a verbal Prophecy. And if that View and Drift has been better cleared up to After-times, if it has been justified by the due Accomplishment of every particular, if the Application of *Mosaick* Rites, upon this foot, to the *Christian* Scheme, has been uniformly and harmoniously drawn out, and confirmed by all the Evidences of the *Christian* Revelation; surely the Force of the Argument is not abated by all this, but we may be allowed now to produce it among the Proofs of our Religion; and are so far from reckoning the Gospel to stand excluded by the old Law, that we are bold to appeal to that very Law it self, for the Proof and Confirmation of it.

IT does not indeed appear, by what was said upon this Argument, that the Law certainly has that typical and figurative Meaning we ascribe to it. For though it be confessed the Practice of the Ancients to convey their Instructions under the Cover of *Hieroglyphicks* and external Symbols; and though it be also certain, that when once the Meaning of such Symbols is fixed, we may argue from them as conclusively as we could do from express Words: Yet from hence it only follows that the *Mosaick Law* possibly might be of that sort; and accordingly, if its Meaning is rightly understood by us, then we argue justly from it for the *Christian* System: but that it really was of that sort, and its Meaning rightly assigned, remains to be shewn by other Arguments. To that Purpose I proposed in the second Place, to apply some Observations that have already been made good, concerning the *Jewish* Discipline. But that I reserve to another Opportunity.

SERMON XXII.

The Grounds of the typical Interpretation of the
Law ; and Objections against it answered.

Preached *September* the 4th, 1732.

The Sixth SERMON on this TEXT.

JOHN i. 17.

*For the Law was given by Moses, but Grace and Truth came by
Jesus Christ.*

Berriman.
Sermon
XXII.

IN order to shew (which was the last general Head to be discoursed of from these Words) how the *Law* of *Moses* did prepare the Way for the Gospel of *Christ*, by its Types and Prefigurations, which foreshewed the Office and Character of the *Messiah*, and made such Application of his Benefits, as was suited to that Age of the World, and proportioned to the Faith and Sincerity of its Observers : I propos'd, at the last time of my appearing in this Place, to digest what I had to offer upon this Subject under three Particulars, *viz.*

- I. To enquire what Grounds may be assign'd for such typical Interpretation of the ancient Rites, as prefigurative of the Gospel Mysteries.
- II. To remove the principal Difficulties and Objections that may seem to lie against this Method of Interpretation. And then,
- III. To shew, under some obvious Instances, how apt and natural this Method of Interpretation is ; and with what Beauty and Significancy it displays and unfolds to us the ancient Institutions.

IN assign'g the Grounds for such typical Interpretation of the *Mosaick* Rites, as prefigurative of the Gospel Mysteries, I propos'd to take them partly from the ancient Usages of other Nations, to instruct by Symbols and figurative Intimations, partly from what I have observed already, in some former Discourses, of the Nature of the *Jewish* Discipline, and partly from the uniform and harmonious View which it appears to have upon the *Christian* Exposition, and that weighty Confirmation which is given to it by the Miracles and other Evidences of the New Testament.

THE ancient Usages of other Nations were urg'd in the last Discourse, to make it probable that the same Method of Instruction, by Types and Symbols, might obtain among the *Jews* ; and when once the Meaning of such Symbols
comes

comes to be fixed and determined, it was insisted that the Argument from them is as certain and conclusive, as that which is taken from express and literal Predictions. But to make all this appear with better Evidence, it is requisite we should now proceed to those other Arguments that have been mentioned to that Purpose. And,

Berriman.
Sermon
XXII.

(2.) SECONDLY, therefore, I proposed to argue from what has been observed already in some former Discourses, of the nature of the *Jewish* Discipline.

IT may now be presumed, that the great End of selecting the Nation of the *Hebrews*^a, for a *peculiar Treasure above all People*, was not merely to aggrandize and make a Shew of them, but to disperse by their means some Knowledge of divine Truths among the other Nations; and especially to preserve some Notice and Expectation of that great Deliverer, who had been promised to the first Parents of Mankind, but in such Terms, and those trusted to such Conveyance of Tradition, that the Promise was in danger of being lost and forgotten, if some farther Care had not been used to train Men up to the Belief and Expectation of it. Upon this foot it is natural to conclude, that the legal Rites, which make so great a Part of the *Jewish* Discipline, must needs be calculated with a View to this great End of their Establishment; and if so, one would suppose there must some mystical Meaning be concealed under them, beyond what is directly contained in the Letter of the Institution, something which refers to the same Promise of Redemption; and under the Cover of typical Observances, exhibits and points out the future Certainty and Method of its Accomplishment.

Exod.
xix. 5.

THIS Conclusion appears to be the more necessary, when it is considered farther, that there is no other common End assignable for that great Burden of Ceremonies, and numerous Prescriptions of the Law. Barely to keep the *Jews* separate from other People, without any higher End in view, or Ground of such Separation, as it seems not it self to be a Point of very great Importance, so it might have been secured with much less Difficulty. And though it be true that God may have wise Reasons for his Institutions, which we are not able to discern or penetrate, and that his Command is Ground enough for our Obedience, though no other Reason should appear besides: yet where there is a clear and intelligible Account to be given of the Reasons of his Institutions, consistent and uniform in all its Parts, and liable to no material Objection from other Considerations, an unprejudiced Mind will naturally close in with such Account, and judge it more expressive of the Honour and Goodness of God, to have acted with this View, than to have conducted his Church under a ritual Dispensation for so many Ages, without any apparent Reason or Design at all. In the one case, we only presume it must be good, because 'tis God's doing; but in the other case, its Beauty is fully and openly displayed. And when to all this it is added, that some of the legal Rights are explained in the Old Testament it self, to have an inward and spiritual View or Meaning, (as was formerly shewn^b in the Instances of Circumcision and Sacrifice) this cannot but give great countenance to such typical and figurative Explication of the whole, as is given of it in the *Christian* Scheme, whereby at once it adds Lustre and Beauty to the *Mosaical* Oeconomy, and gains a farther Manifestation of its own. For if once we admit a mystical and latent Meaning to lie concealed under the Surface and Letter of external Observances, and it is also evident that the Interpretation assigned in the New Testament is fair and rational, and not clogged with the Incumbrance of any material Difficulties: it will then lie upon the Adversaries of *Christianity*, either to assign some better Interpretation of these ancient Mysteries, or else to acquiesce in this Account of them, which recommends it self by the Uniformity of all its Parts, and

^a See *Jenkins's* Reasonableness of the Christian Religion.

^b See Sermon. XIX.

Berriman. and is clear from the Accufation of any palpable Absurdities. But this Confi-
 Sermon deration may be farther urged under the
 XXII.

(3.) THIRD Argument which was mentioned to this Purpose, as taken from the uniform and harmonious View which the *Mosaick Law* appears to have upon the *Christian Exposition*; and that weighty Confirmation which is given to it by the Miracles, and other Evidences of the New Testament.

John
 iii. 19.

IT will appear hereafter what is the View ascribed to the *Mosaick Law* by the *Christian Exposition*; and though there may be other subordinate Regards attended to in some particular Precepts, yet that there is one grand End or Design kept up throughout the Whole, to which all its Parts are reconcileable, without any Dissonancy or Repugnancy whatever. This cannot but be thought a reasonable Inducement to admit it as the best Exposition, till some other be offered to exceed, or at least to equal it. We have the Satisfaction of seeing the whole System placed in an advantageous Light, such as displays the Wisdom and Usefulness of the former Dispensation, at the same time that it confirms and bears witness to the present. And shall we then *love* and chuse *Darkness rather than Light*? and reject an Account that is so easy and rational, that we may suppose the ancient System either to have had no determinate View or End at all, or none to be assigned with such Uniformity and Consistency in all its Parts? This, surely, is not the part of candid and ingenuous Minds, which would rather close in with the greatest Probabilities, and accept of such Exposition as is most for the Honour and Advantage of divine Revelation. But then especially when it is considered after all, that this Exposition, being advanced in the Writings of the New Testament, has a Claim to all that Evidence by which those Writings are themselves attested, this must confirm it to us with the greatest Certainty; and then the *Christian Scheme*, which explains to us the ancient Types, will be in return illustrated and explained by them.

THAT the Books of the New Testament are genuine; that they were anciently received as Matter of divine Revelation, and containing the authentick Records and Standard of our holy Religion; that they were proved to be so by the miraculous Gifts and Operations of those who wrote them, which gave Proof of the divine Power that accompanied them, and bore witness that *God was with them of a truth*; that the same Power is to be argued from the Success which followed them, procured by unlikely Means, and contrary to human Policy, when Men artless and illiterate set themselves to oppose such inveterate Prejudices, as had been long supported by the Authority of Kings and Potentates, as well as by the Wisdom of Philosophers, and not only succeeded in the Conversion of great Multitudes, but left such Influence behind them, as made an entire Conquest over the Wills and Affections of a great part of Mankind, and propagated their Religion under all Difficulties, till its greatest Opposers in the end submitted to it, and acknowledged its divine Original: All this, and more, has been often and strongly urged to assert the *Christian Revelation*; and if it be sufficient for that Purpose, it must approve at the same time that Exposition of the legal Rites, which is clearly asserted by the *Christian Revelation*, and contained as a Part or Branch of it.

LOOK in the New Testament and see, if the Style and Phrases of the *Mosaick Law* be not transferred, from the literal external Meaning to which *Moses* had applied them, to denote those mystical and spiritual Benefits which are proposed to us in the Church of *Christ*; if the Pomp of Sacrifice and outward Services, be not made to signify the inward Devotion of the Mind, and most absolute Surrendry of all the Powers and Affections of the Soul; if we have not the most express Construction of the ancient Ceremonies, to import the whole Mystery of *Christ's eternal Priesthood*, and *Sacrifice*, and *Intercession* for us. As this will appear hereafter in variety of Instances, so the Evidences of the New Testament, by which this Exposition is supported, have been placed
 in

in a just Light by abler Hands already, and cannot be pursued farther in this Place, without diverting too much from the Business I have undertaken. Upon supposition of both, the Argument is irresistible, that this must be a just and true Exposition of the Ceremonies of the Law of *Moses*, which is so clearly stated in the Writings of the New Testament, and therefore supported by such various kinds of Evidence.

Berriman.
Sermon
XXII.

AND thus far of the Grounds to be assigned for such typical Interpretation of the ancient Rites, as prefigurative of the Gospel Mysteries: which was the first Particular to be spoken to under the last Head of Discourse. The next Business proposed now follows, in the

2. SECOND place, to remove the principal Difficulties and Objections that may seem to lie against this Method of Interpretation. And they, as I take it, are generally reducible to these three, *viz.* (1.) That it is obscure. (2.) That it is arbitrary. And, (3.) That it is inconsistent. And tho' these have been already in good measure obviated, by what was offered before upon this Subject, yet for the clearer Resolution of all Difficulties, it may be proper to treat of them distinctly in this Place. And,

Object. 1. FIRST it is objected, that the typical Interpretation is obscure and difficult, that it seems not worthy of God to instruct his People in so abstruse and ambiguous a Manner, such as to the Learned might appear extremely doubtful and variable, and to the Vulgar wholly unintelligible.

Answer. BUT in answer to this, so long as there appears no palpable Absurdity in the Nature and Reason of the Thing, it seems too much for us to pronounce with any peremptoriness, what Method may be most *worthy of God*, or suitable to his unerring Wisdom. He has the Issues and Connection of all Things before him in one View, and therefore may have many and wise Ends to serve by his Dispensations, which we cannot penetrate, whose Views are necessarily confined, by the condition of our Being, to a very strait and narrow Compass. It cannot therefore become us to determine of the Counsels and Designs of Providence, or make it an Objection against any Dispensation, that we are not able to comprehend the Reason, or fathom the Depth of it. We find in the slight and narrow Projections that fall within our Management, how little we are able to foresee the Consequence of Things, and how often we see reason to wish we had done otherwise, in those Concerns which were thought to have been conducted with the greatest Caution and Prudence. And shall we then presume to interpose in the Counsels of the Almighty, or think ourselves qualified to undertake or influence the supreme Government and Direction of the Universe? *It is as high as Heaven, what canst thou do? deeper than Hell, what canst thou know? the measure thereof is longer than the Earth, and broader than the Sea.*

Job xi.
8, 9.

BUT tho' this Answer might suffice to satisfy a modest and humble Mind, yet it has been shewn, over and above all this, that there are some apparent Reasons for this Method of Instruction, such as may serve to silence the more daring and audacious. Were it but to teach vain Men a Lesson of Humility, in shewing, that their own Faculties and Reasonings cannot instruct them fully in their Duty, but they must submit themselves moreover to be taught of God, by the unerring Precepts of divine Revelation: This surely is an End *worthy of God* to design, and highly conducing to the Benefit of Man. And this very End will farther be promoted by that Industry and Care which is required for the thorough Knowledge and Understanding of such hidden Mysteries. Nay, and let it be remembered, that if the Prescription of symbolical Rites were attended with some Obscurity, yet it made however a stronger Impression upon vulgar Minds, than bare Prophecy would have been apt to do, and so became rather a Help and Succour, than any real Disadvantage, to human Weakness and Infirmary.

Berriman.
Sermon
XXII.

NOR is it perhaps the least Ground of such a Method of proceeding, to conceal the sacred Myſteries from evil Spirits and evil Men. As their obſtinate and ſettled Malice makes them at all times unworthy of any Communications of divine Knowledge; ſo there are ſome ſpecial Reaſons to be given, why they ſhould not be let into ſuch future Myſteries as depended on the concurrent Acting of free Agents, whoſe acting was neceſſary to their Accompliſhment, and who were yet to act with Liberty. Had the Notices of the *Meſſiah* been ſo full and explicit, as to make it impoſſible for the moſt obſtinate Prejudice to have miſtaken it, who would imagine either *Judas*, or his Countrymen, ſhould have run the lengths they did? And tho' they might not have been the better Men for that, but equally ſubject to depraved Affections; yet they had been almoſt irreſiſtibly reſtrained from acting in that Manner, which did ſo ſignally contribute to the Redemption of Mankind. It ſeems as if *Satan* himſelf^c was not apprized of the Myſtery of the Croſs of *Chriſt*, and therefore aimed to defeat the Deſign of our Salvation, by the very Method that was proper to effect it. Certain it is, tho' he maliciously promoted our Saviour's Crucifixion, he was greatly hurt by it in the Event: *For through Death, Chriſt deſtroyed him that had the Power of Death, that is, the Devil; and having ſpoiled Principalities and Powers, he made a* Heb. ii. 14. *Shew of them openly, triumphing over them,* in the Abolition of their Oracles, and Heathen Superſtition^d. From hence we may collect, that he miſtook the ancient Notes of this Myſtery: But had the ſacred Oracles been liable to no Miſconſtruction, had there been no Obſcurity in the Method of revealing our Redemption; 'tis likely the Tempter would rather have employed his Malice any other Way, than in promoting that Effect which he aimed above all others to defeat.

MEAN while, though there was ſuch Obſcurity, as might leave the Proud and Malicious to the blind Reasonings and Errors of their own Minds; there was however, we have ſeen, ſuch Light and Information, as might give the humble and ſerious Enquirer ſome glimmering and diſtant View of this ſtupendous Myſtery, which gradually opened and enlarged, as the Event drew nearer on, by freſher Notices and clearer Predictions, till at laſt the Accompliſhment of all diſplayed it with the utmoſt Advantage; and then the Beauty of the Whole appeared in the Conformity of all its Parts, and the Truth of this Interpretation was attested and confirmed by the divine Power that accompanied the Witneſſes and Preachers of it. So that the Pretence of Obſcurity is weak and inſufficient; it was as clear as was proper in the earlier Ages, which will not be accountable for more Knowledge than had been given them: but it is now cleared up beyond Exception, and the Proof we have that it was formerly revealed, tho' under ſome Obſcurity, is to us no inconfiderable Confirmation and Enforcement of the Truth of our Religion. And ſo much for the Objection of Obſcurity. It was ſaid moreover to be objected, in the

Object. 2. SECOND place, That this typical Interpretation of the ancient Rites is arbitrary and precarious; *i. e.* there is no Neceſſity in the Nature of the thing to ground or evince the Truth of ſuch Interpretation, but Men of Wit and Fancy may take a ſcope and compaſs to ſuit all things to their own Humour; and ſo that which is really Matter of private Fancy and Invention, will be made the Standard of Divine Truth.

Anſw. THE Answer to this may be in part collected from what has been already offer'd, and the reſt may be eaſily ſupplied by what ſtill remains to be obſerv'd. So far as this Interpretation is already authorized by Men inſpired of God, by Men whoſe divine Miſſion and Character has amply been attested either by Prophetical Prediction, or undoubted Miracles; ſo far, without queſtion, it muſt be as well fixed and grounded as any literal Interpretation, and no more

^c See the Quotation from *Ignatius* in the foregoing Sermon, with the reſt of the Note on that Occaſion, p. 760.

^d See Sermon IX. X, &c.

more subject to the uncertain Sallies of Fancy and Enthusiasm. It will be shewn, I trust, that the main Strokes of the *Mosaical* Oeconomy have been so interpreted to our Hands, and have already received the Sanction of divine Testimony. And tho' it may not be pretended, that there is no Type to be alledg'd which has not been expressly applied to that Purpose by some inspired Writer; but rather on the contrary, that the Instances we meet with of this sort in the inspired Writers, do afford an Intimation that the like latent Meaning remains to be search'd out in other Instances: yet those which come cloth'd with such Authority, are ever to be receiv'd with greatest Deference and Certainty; and for the rest, there are certain Rules to be prescribed, which may serve to guard us against any Exorbitances of a fanciful or crazy Brain.

THE first and principal Direction, in that Case, is to keep to the *Analogy* of the Faith, and not admit any Interpretation of a Matter mystical, that shall any way clash or interfere with what is clearly revealed. The Doctrines that are expressly taught in Scripture, and deliver'd in manifest and open Terms, are as a Guide and Pole-Star to direct us to avoid all Danger and Absurdity, in interpreting such Passages as are obscure and mystical. So again the Rites which are but literally contain'd and deliver'd in one part of Scripture, if they be explain'd to have a mystical View and Meaning in another, that Explication gives a handle for expounding other Rites (tho' not expressly so applied in Scripture) in order still to the same View, and in subserviency to the same Design. This is not an arbitrary and precarious Method, but it is keeping to the View and End of Scripture; so far from overthrowing what is clearly reveal'd, that it helps to clear and illustrate what might otherwise be dark and obscure.

GREAT care however should be taken, whilst we are looking after a *mystical* Interpretation, that we do not the mean while neglect or exclude the *literal*. Our Argument from the typical Interpretation of the ancient Rites, and the allegorical Explication of ancient History, must depend upon the Supposition of their having been literally prescribed and transacted; and in vain shall we look after the hidden Meaning, if the Fact, under which it is said to be conceal'd, be fictitious and without Foundation. If the History of the Creation, or the Fall of Man, be themselves supposed to be fictitious, no Allegory that is built upon them, can have any Weight or Importance. And if the Rites of the *Mosaick Law* were not literally prescribed, it can be to little purpose to look after their Significancy. There may be in some of the prophetic Descriptions, an intermixture of some Facts, which were but visionally or parabolically represented: but in religious Institutions, and in Matters of plain History, to exclude the literal Sense would be the heighth of Distraction, and found our mystical Interpretation in the Sand.

LASTLY, It should also be remembered, that where we have not the express Authority of some inspired Writer to support our Interpretation, we are not to lay great stress on any single Type or Allegory, but go thro' the whole System of divine Revelation, preserving the Harmony of all its Parts, and ever giving preference to those Expositions which best suit with the uniform View and Design of the whole taken together.

If these Rules be observed, with diligent Search, and Humility of Spirit, (for that is always requisite in our religious Enquiries) with humble and ardent Addresses for divine Illumination; there can be little danger of running into any Errors, in assigning the typical Interpretation of any Rites prescribed, or other Fact related in the Old Testament: there can be none, of running into such Mistakes, as shall be of any very mischievous and fatal Consequence. And from these same Considerations, which have been thus far urged to give satisfaction to the second Objection, we may also proceed in great measure to satisfy the

Object. 3. THIRD that remains, *viz.* That this way of interpreting the Scripture by Types and Allegories is inconsistent with it self, and may be urg'd to prove contrary Conclusions: inasmuch as, from the different Turn of Imagination

768 Objections against the typical Interpretation answer'd.

Berriman. nation that may prevail with different Men, the Type or Allegory may be assign'd with such different Views, as shall be directly contradictory to one another.

Sermon
XXII.

Ans. I say, the same Considerations, which were urged before, may be now urged over again in reply to this Objection. If in assigning such myttical Interpretation, we keep within the Restrictions and Limitations before laid down; if we keep the Analogy of the Faith constantly in View, and admit nothing that is any way inconsistent or repugnant to it; if we do not advance our myttical Interpretation upon the ruins of the literal, but consider it as consequential and supported by it; if we lay not too great stress on any single Type or Allegory, but go thro' the whole System of divine Revelation, to preserve the Harmony and Uniformity of all its Parts; there can be little danger of Contradiction or Inconsistency among us, little or no room for any wide Difference in the Meaning we assign to any Type or Allegory.

OR if in some Particulars there should be different Interpretations, which cannot be perfectly cleared up, to the Satisfaction of all equitable Minds; yet they shall not affect the great Concerns of Religion, it shall be only in such Matters as may be variously disputed, without breach of Charity, or Violation of the Faith. Where the Analogy of Faith is preserved, there can be nothing contrary to Faith admitted; and if in other respects there should be some Variety, it is what happens in assigning the literal Sense of Scripture, as well as the typical or allegorical. So that if the Difference of Interpretations be any Objection against the Method of interpreting, I doubt it will lie against every Method that shall ever be proposed, till we rise above the present State of human Knowledge, and have no Remains of Sin or Frailty to blind or discompose us.

AND thus much for the two first Particulars proposed under the third Head of Discourse. We have seen the Grounds to be assigned for a typical Interpretation of the ancient Rites, as prefigurative of the Gospel Mysteries. And we have also removed the principal Difficulties and Objections that may seem to lie against this Method of Interpretation. It remains, in the third and last place, to be shewn under some obvious Instances, how apt and natural this Method of Interpretation is, and with what Beauty and Significancy it displays and unfolds to us the ancient Mysteries. But the stating of this, in such Points especially as the Scripture has placed beyond all reasonable Exception, must be left for the Subject of two remaining Discourses.

SERMON

SERMON XXIII.

The Aptness and Significancy of the typical Interpretation of the Law.

Preached *October* the 2d, 1732.

The Seventh SERMON on this TEXT.

JOHN i. 17.

For the Law was given by Moses, but Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ.

AFTER having explained the Grounds to be assigned for a typical Interpretation of the ancient Rites, as prefigurative of the Gospel-Mysteries; which were taken partly from the ancient Usages of other Nations, partly from the Nature and Genius of the *Jewish* Discipline, and partly from that uniform and harmonious View which it appears to have upon the *Christian* Exposition, and that weighty Confirmation which is given to it, by the Miracles and other Evidences of the New Testament: I went on to guard this Method of Interpretation against those Objections, to which it may seem liable, of Obscurity, Uncertainty, and Inconsistency.

*Berriman.
Sermon
XXIII.*

IN arguing from the Harmony and Uniformity of the *Christian* Exposition, I proceeded only on the Supposition, that it would appear to be uniform and harmonious. But the Proof or Illustration of that Matter was reserved for the Business of a

3. THIRD Particular; where it now remains to be shewn, under some obvious Instances, how apt and natural this Method of Interpretation is, and with what Beauty and Significancy it displays and unfolds to us the ancient Mysteries.

THE Authority of such Interpretation, being the same with the Authority of the Books of the New Testament, by which it is supported and confirmed, has been often hinted at in these Discourses, and more largely discussed and illustrated by abler Pens. But I confine my self at present to that internal Evidence which arises from the Fitness and Congruity of such Interpretation it self, from its being suited to the Genius of the *Jewish* Discipline, and giving a most reasonable and consistent Account of the End and Purport of the whole Oeconomy. And in order to shew this, I shall not need to be solicitous, whether an exact Account is to be given of every particular Rite; it will be enough if

Berriman. the main Heads of the Ceremonial Law may be fairly reduced to this View and Design, and accounted for by this Method of Interpretation. To this purpose, I would take the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, with other places of the New Testament, for my Guide in three especial Instances, which relate to the essential Parts of the *Levitical* Worship, and almost the whole Exercise of ritual Religion; namely, the Place of Worship, which was the *Tabernacle* first, and afterwards the *Temple*; the Method of worshipping, by *Sacrifice*, and *Incense*; and the Administrator, which was in some Cases the High-Priest alone, and in the rest, any of the Sons of *Aaron*.

BUT before I proceed directly to these Instances, it may be necessary to premise, what has been hinted formerly, that it is declared in general of the ritual Precepts of the Law, that they had a *Shadow of good things to come, but the Body is of Christ*; so that *Christ* is set forth as the great End of the Law to every one that believeth, and the Law it self as a *Schoolmaster* conducting to him. By all which we learn, that the whole Law was calculated with a View to the *Messiah*, that its great End and Tendency was to point out the principal Parts of his Office and Character, together with those Benefits which the Church was to expect from him.

I SHALL not need, after this plain and obvious Remark, to undertake a laborious Confutation of that Conceit, which has been too hastily admitted by some learned Men^a, that the principal of the *Jewish* Rites were ordained in imitation of the *Heathen* Superstition, to which the People had so long been addicted, that God saw fit to indulge their Fondness for the Pomp of outward Ceremonies, and transfer to the Worship of himself, what had been impiously abused to support Idolatry and Superstition. A Conceit directly contrary to the Tenor and Genius of the Old Testament, which every where labours to withhold or reclaim the People from every Appearance of idolatrous Practices! And can it then be imagined God should prescribe the Ceremonies of such idolatrous Worship, in order to indulge in his People that Fondness and Inclination to them, which it was one principal End of all his Discipline to correct and extirpate?

As then it is asserted, without Proof, of many of these Rites, that the same, or such like, had been used in Ages elder than *Moses*, and applied originally to idolatrous Worship, (it being much more likely that the Idolaters began to use them afterwards, in Imitation of the true Worshippers of God) so if that Fact could be maintained of any of them, some other End of the Resemblance ought to be assigned, which may consist with the general Tenor of the Old Testament, and not this of a Compliance, which directly contradicts it. It might rather be supposed^b, that some of the *Mosaick* Usages had been in use among the ancient Patriarchs, which we know to be the case of *Sacrifice*: And as the Nations that sunk into Idolatry had not lost all Footsteps of this traditional Religion, so without doubt it was carefully preserved among the *Hebrews*, and God thought not fit to discard it in his legal Worship, which was made subservient to the general Tenor and Significancy of those more ancient Institutions. And since a clear and consistent End of the whole is assigned by the Writers of the New Testament, referring the Origin of all to God, and their Interpretation is confirmed by Miracles, and various kinds of Evidence; I see not what should be the Bar to our admitting the Sense which they have given, and esteeming that to be the just and true Account of the Rites and Ordinances of the legal Dispensation. This ought surely to satisfy as many as admit the Books of the New Testament for genuine and sacred. And as for those who refuse them under that Character, let it be their Province to disprove the Evidence which has often been produced in behalf of their Authority.

THIS allegorical Genius of the Old Law^c, is elegantly set forth by St. Paul, under the Type of *Moses* receiving a *Glory* in his Countenance by conversing with God, which when the People were not able to behold, he veiled it from their

^a Marham, Spencer, alii. ^b See Bp. Cumberland de legibus Patriarchar. at the End of Orig. gent. antiquiss. ^c Vid. Witf. Miscel. l. 2. Diff. 1. §. 74.

their Sight. *Moses* is here proposed as the Minister of the former Dispensation, whose Ministry was not without its *Glory*, as it revealed the Truth and Will of God, and pointed out to *Christ* the Mediator of a better Covenant. But since the People *could not stedfastly look* into this great End of the Law, nor bear the naked Lustre of so bright a *Glory*, it had therefore a *Veil* or Covering cast over it, being taught by symbolical Rites and Adumbrations, which however a dull and carnal People might rest in, without searching out the Mystery, yet the Time was to come, when that *Veil* should be taken away, (as *Moses* took it off, when he returned to God) and all with open Face behold, as in a *Glass*, the *Glory of the Lord*.

Berriman.
Sermon
XXIII.

THE *Jews* themselves^d, tho' they deny the *Christian* Exposition, yet are not backward to acknowledge some allegorical or mystical Meaning to lie concealed under the Precepts of the Law. And what^e *Maimonides* observes of our material Frame, that it is as a *Wall* or *Veil* to intercept the Brightness of divine Truths, might as well be applied to the Letter of *Mosaick* Precepts, and prophetic Vision, represented by that *thick Darknes* in which God is said to have revealed himself, and that dark and gloomy Day on which the Law was delivered from Mount *Sinai*.

Exod.
xix. 18.
Deut.
iv. 11.
Judg.
v. 4, 5.

WHILST thus the *Jews* acknowledge a mystical or latent Meaning, and the Gospel has shewn *Christ* to be the End or Purport of the whole *Mosaick* Discipline, we may proceed with better Confidence to search into Particulars. And though all Particulars are not expressly applied by the Writers of the New Testament, yet the Specimen which they have given, authorises us to enquire after the rest; especially since they have expressly assured us, that the whole had the same View or Design, and have passed over some Matters in a summary way, as things of the same Tendency, tho' they *could not stay to speak* of them *particularly*. There is not indeed the same Certainty in those Particulars, which are searched out by the Sagacity of human Reason, nor is the same stress to be laid upon them, as on those of which express Application has been made by some inspired Writer. But yet when they are urged not singly or apart by themselves, but in conjunction with the whole System of ritual Religion, not to gainsay the Applications that are made in Scripture, but conformably and in subserviency unto them; there is then a weight and significancy in such Interpretations; they display the Harmony and Beauty of the *Mosaick* Precepts, and shew how the same Wisdom which had been more evidently taught of some, did really run throughout, and give Sanction to the whole.

Heb.
ix. 5.

Now as *all the Treasures of Wisdom are hid in Christ*, so that there is great variety of Benefits in his Religion, and yet all terminate and center in himself; we are not to wonder, if on one hand many of the legal Prescriptions should be caculated to set forth or signify the same Mystery, and on the other hand variety of Mysteries should be referr'd to by one and the same Rite or Ceremony.

Col. ii. 3.

THUS much being premised in general of the Nature and Tendency of ritual Precepts, I proceed more particularly to give some Specimen of them in the Instances before mentioned. And,

(1.) FIRST then I proposed to explain the Mystery of the Place of Worship prescribed under the Law, which was the *Tabernacle* first, and afterwards the *Temple*; the first appointed for the temporary Uses of the *Israelites*, till its

Utensils

^d Vid. Witsl. ut sup. §. 22, 23.

^e Materia est veluti maceria magna et velum impediens veram apprehensionem intelligentiæ abstractæ. — Et hoc innuitur passim in omnibus prophetarum libris, quod velum aliquod sit distinguens inter nos et Deum: ut cum dicitur, *absconditus nobis esse in nube; in obscuritate; in densâ caligine* — eò quod materiæ respectu imperfecti nimis sumus ad illum apprehendendum — non tamen sine ratione fuit quod Deus se in nube revelarit, verum ad nos commonefaciendos, quod apprehensio veritatis ejus nobis sit impossibilis, propter turbulenta at tenebrosam illam, quæ nos, nequaquam vero Deum circumdat, materiam — Præterea, notum et in confesso est in gente nostrâ, quod dies illa, qua steterunt in monte Sinai, fuerit nebulosa, et nonnihil pluviosa. Maimon. More Nevoch. ex version. Buxtorf. par. 3. cap. 9.

Berriman. Sermon XXIII. Utensils should be translated to that more solemn Place, which God should chuse for the better Celebration of divine Worship. *The most High dwelleth not in Temples made with hands.* He neither can be inclosed in any possible Compass, nor wants to be secured against the Inclemencies of Air or Weather. Yet in these Places he was pleased to vouchsafe a symbolical Manifestation of his Presence: from whence the Tabernacle had its Name of *משכן Mishcan*, as being the *Habitation* or Dwelling-house of God; and the like Name of *שכינה Shechinah*, is given by the *Jewish* Writers to that bright Appearance or Divine Glory which resided in it. This figured out that Mystery in time to be accomplished, when the Son of God should clothe himself with human Flesh, who is therefore said, by an Allusion to that *Hebrew* word, *σκηνοῦσαι*, to make his Tabernacle with us¹, to have had the *Fulness of the Godhead* (answering to that *Fulness of Glory* sometimes manifested in the old Sanctuary) dwelling² or residing in him *bodily*, and to have raised that *Temple of his own Body* which was blest^d with this Divine Inhabitant.

AGAIN, the same Building, which was thus calculated to signify the gracious Presence of God among his People, was also fitted to denote as well every private faithful Member of *Christ*, as the whole Church which is made up of them, and that under different Conditions or Estates. Of every true and faithful Member of *Christ*, it is reckoned that he has *Christ* dwelling or residing in him, and is so warm'd and enlightned by the gracious Influence and Direction of his Spirit, as from hence to be esteem'd the *Temple of the Holy Ghost*. In like Manner, when spoken of together, they are said as *lively Stones* to be built up a *spiritual House*, to be built upon the foundation of the *Apostles and Prophets*, *Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner-stone*; in whom all the Building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy Temple in the Lord; in whom ye are also built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.

THE Skins and baser Materials, which serv'd for covering the Sanctuary, whilst its inward Utensils were glorious and of great value, may at once lead us to a twofold Contemplation of our Redeemer, who, in his outward Form, may appear *despised and rejected of Men*, at the same time that they, who look to him by Faith, can easily behold his *Glory, the Glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of Grace and Truth*: as also of the Church, which being his Body, is conformed to its Head, *all glorious within*, tho' outwardly perhaps despised, and stript of secular Advantages.

ONCE more, the Condition of the *Israelites*, being at first unsettled and moveable, their *Tabernacle* was composed of such Materials, and compacted in such Order and Method, that it might easily be taken down and set up, and moved about with them from one Place to another; 'till at last when their Wars with the Natives were at an end, and themselves in peaceable Possession of their promised Inheritance, its sacred Utensils were fixed in the Temple built by *Solomon*, and that state of Rest attended with a great increase of Glory. So *Christ* was in this World as in a Wilderness, *not having where to lay his head* with Constancy or Quiet, and subject to the Mortality and Weakness of our Nature: but being raised from the Dead, he dieth no more, *Death hath no more Dominion over him*, being now enthron'd at the right hand of God, far above all Principality and Power, in a state of endless Triumph and Glory. So also is his Church at present in a state of Travail and Warfare, but shall hereafter be translated to a triumphant State, and then enjoy an everlasting Rest and Felicity.

BUT besides this general Consideration of the whole Sanctuary taken together, we may likewise turn our Eyes distinctly on its several Parts, and observe the Mysteries conceal'd under them. The Sanctuary, strictly taken, was a Building cover'd in, secured against the outward Injuries of Weather, and unlawful to be entred by any but the Sons of *Aaron*. But this was encompass'd by a Court

¹ Εσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν, John i. 14.

² Ἐν αὐτῷ κατοικεῖ πᾶν τὸ πλῆρωμα τῆς θεότητος σωματικῶς, Col. ii. 9.

Court of large extent, which stood open to the Air, wherein was the *Laver*, and the *Altar of Burnt Offering*, and in which the Priests and Levites perform'd the *Apparatus* of their Sacrificial Worship^b. As this Court seems to have been but one at first, so it has been suppos'd that the rest of the People, who were clean, were not refused access to it. But after the Tabernacle was fixed, we find *David* speaking of the Courts of the Lord, in the plural: and especially after the Building of the Temple, there is no doubt to be made but there was more than one. We find the *inner Court*, or the *Court of the Priests*, and the *great Court* distinguished from each other at the time of its Erection. And accordingly, upon occasion of *Manasseh's* Idolatry, they are term'd *the two Courts of the House of the Lord*, as if there were no more. But afterwards the number was encreased: and then the *Court of the Priests* was distinguished from that of the *People*, as that was again from another of the *Women*, and that from the last, of the *Gentiles*, who were not allow'd to proceed fartherⁱ. This fitly represents to us the visible Church of *Christ*, which has its own Enclosure, separating its Members from the *Heathen* and unbelieving World, admitting them to the Privilege of outward Worship, but still detaining them in hope of better things that are invisible.

THE *Altar* and the *Laver*, which were situated in this Court, were both significant Emblems and Types of our Redeemer; the one, as he is the *Fountain open'd to the House of David, and to the Inhabitants of Jerusalem, for Sin and for Uncleanness*; the other, as he is the only *Mediator* sanctifying our Gifts, and rendring our Addresses acceptable; thro' whom alone we are allow'd to have access unto the Father. At the same time they did prefigure the *Sacraments* appointed in the *Christian Church*; namely, *Baptism*, set forth as the *Laver of Regeneration*; and the *Eucharist*, as the *Memorial* of that Atonement *Christ* has made for Sin. The sacred Fire, which burned continually upon the *Altar*, is a significant Type of that *eternal Spirit*, thro' whom *Christ* offer'd himself without Spot to God, and without whose sanctifying Virtue the Oblation of ourselves will never be acceptable. The *Horns* of the *Altar*, which were for refuge to such Criminals as laid hold on them, may set forth the Power and Acceptance of our Redeemer, that *Horn of Salvation in the House of David, who is able to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him*.

So much for the *Court* by which the *Sanctuary* was encompass'd. The *Sanctuary* it self was divided into two Parts, the first of which was called the *Holy Place*, the other was the *Holy of Holies*, or the *most Holy*. Into the *Holy Place* none but the Sons of *Aaron* were allowed to enter, who do in one respect, prefigure the Members of *Christ's* invisible Church, i. e. all the true and faithful Members, who are declared to be a *royal Priesthood*, and to be made *Kings and Priests unto God*; inasmuch as they are admitted to those unseen and spiritual Advantages, to which the carnal and meer external Professor can never penetrate. In another respect they prefigure the Ministers of *Christ*, who are allowed a nearer approach to the Divine Majesty, and, by commission from our Head, to negotiate in the Affair of Salvation.

HERE was the golden Table of *Shew-bread*, with twelve Loaves weekly set upon it, answerably to the Tribes of *Israel*; to denote *Christ* set forth as the *Bread of Life* to all the Faithful, in the Ordinances of his Church, in his Word as well as in his *Sacraments*. Here also was the *golden Candlestick*, with seven burning Lamps, to denote the Illumination and manifold Graces of the Holy Ghost shed forth in Baptism, cultivated and improved by other Ordinances, and display'd in the different Parts and Members of the Church. They were lighted every Evening, and required to continue till the Morning^k, to intimate

VOL. III.

(9 L)

that

^a Vid. Witf. Miscel. Sacr. vol. 1. c. 2. Differt. 1. §. 15.

ⁱ See Lightfoot's Prospect of the Temple, ch. 16, &c.

^k It is said, Lev. xxiv. 2. that the Lamps should burn continually, and this is explained, the verse following, *Aaron shall order it from the Evening until the Morning, before the Lord continually*. It is said again, 1 Sam. iii. 3, 4. that the Lord called Samuel, *ore the Lamp of God went out in the Temple*, which seems to imply that it

Berriman.
Sermon
XXIII.

Psal.
lxv. 4.
lxxxiv. 2.
xcvi. 8.
1 Kings
vi. 36.
vii. 12.
2 Chron.
iv. 9.
2 Chron.
xxxiii. 5.

Zech.
xiii. 1.
1 Tim.
ii. 5.
Rom. v. 2.
Tit. iii. 5.
Luk.
xxii. 19.
1 Cor. xi.
24, 25, 26.
Heb.
ix. 14.
Luk. i. 69.
Heb. vii. 5.

1 Pet.
ii. 9.
Rev. i. 6.
xx. 6.

John
vi. 35.

Berriman. that that emblematical Light might have its Use, during the Night of ritual
 Sermon Types and Shadows, but might well be superceded, when *Christ* should arise to
 XXIII. give us stronger *Light*, when *the Day* should dawn, and *the Day Star* arise in
 Eph. our *Hearts*. Lastly, here was the *golden Altar of Incense*, in the nearest Situa-
 v. 14. tion to the *Holiest of all*, whose *Horns* were yearly sprinkled with the Blood of
 2 Pet. Sacrifices, but whose daily Use was the burning of *sweet Odours*, not only as the
 i. 19. Symbol of the People's Prayers daily offer'd, but likewise of that continual Inter-
 Rev. viii. cession of *Christ*, before the *Throne* in Heaven, which alone can render us or
 3, 4. our Petitions acceptable.

BEYOND this *Holy Place* was the last Apartment, called *the Holiest of all*,
 the venerable Emblem of the highest Heaven, containing the most significant
 Symbol of Divine Glory, and of *Christ* in his state of Exaltation. This was
 divided from the former Apartment by a *Veil*, as that was from the inner
 Court; which, as it denoted the Concealment of these Mysteries under the Dark-
 ness and Obscurity of legal Shadows, and the *veiling* of Divine Glory in the
 Person of *Christ*, under the Covering of Human Flesh; so withal the High-
 Priest turning it by, and *entring once every Year*, imported that a Day should
 come, when that Obscurity should be removed, and Gospel Truths be openly
 revealed, when a *Forerunner* in our name should *enter into Heaven it self*, to
 Heb. appear in the presence of God for us, to intercede in our Behalf, and to take pos-
 vi. 20. session in our Name, as a sure Pledge and Earnest, that we hereafter shall with
 ix. 24. open Face behold the Glory of the Lord.
 2 Cor. iii. 18.

WITHIN this Veil was the most remarkable Symbol of the old Oeconomy,
 namely, the *Ark of the Covenant*¹, made of Cedar, and overlaid with Gold,
 cover'd with the golden *Propitiatory* or *Mercy-Seat*, which golden *Cherubim*,
 with Faces turning to each other, beheld with Veneration; and over all, was
 that Manifestation of Divine Glory, distinguished by the name of *Shechinah*.
 Jer. This seems to be that *Throne of God*, which is celebrated by the Prophets in
 xvii. 12. the *Jewish* Sanctuary. And what could it more aptly signify than *Christ*, re-
 Ezek. presented as our King and Governor, thro' whom God is pleased to shew him-
 xliii. 7. self *propitious* and gracious to his People, to undertake the Protection of his
 faithful Servants, and receive them into Joy and Felicity? But whereas this
Ark of old was shut up within the inmost *Sanctuary*, and hid from vulgar Eyes,
 which could not penetrate to look into the Mysteries of our Redemption; we
 find the *Temple of God* is represented in the New Testament, to be laid open in
 Rev. xi. 19. Heaven, so that *the Ark of his Testament* was seen in it. Immediately then up-
 on our Saviour's Expiration, when he had now perform'd his Sacrifice, and was
 about to enter into his Glory, the *Veil of the Temple* was not drawn aside as
 heretofore, to be drawn back again and return to former Obscurity; but it
 Mat. was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, to import that the legal Mysteries
 xxvii. 51. are now unveil'd and those Benefits conferr'd in Verity, which were formerly
 dispens'd in Types and Figures.

I NEED not after this enlarge upon the Things that were reposed in or near
 the *Ark*^m, the *Tables of the Covenant*, the *Book of the Law*, the *Pot* of uncor-
 rupted

it was suffer'd to go out, or was extinguished in the Morning. Yet *Kimchi* says upon the Place, that the
Western Lamp, (*viz.* that in the middle, bending towards the *Sanctum Sanctorum*) was always burning. (See
Lightfoot's Temple, ch. xiv. §. 4.) *Josephus* (*Antiq. Jud.* 1. 3. c. 8, alias 9. §. 3.) represents this Matter as if
 three of the *Lamps* burnt all the Day, and the rest were lighted up at Night. And this seems to be the Mind
 of the *Mishna* and of *Bartenora's* Comment upon it (in tit. *Tamid.* cap. 3. §. 9. ex edit. *Surenhus.* tom. 5.
 p. 296.) when, besides the *Western Lamp* always burning, it is said that the two eastern *Lamps*, if they went
 out by the Morning, should be lighted again, whereas the rest need not be lighted till the Evening. But
 this is certain on all hands, that they were all required to be burning in the Night, though not in the Day:
 and the perpetual burning of some, might be a Type of future never-failing Light.

¹ Besides this, the Apostle (*Heb.* ix. 3.) mentions the *golden Censer* as contain'd in the most Holy Place.
 But that not being mentioned by *Moses* to be there reposed, some have thought the Apostle meant only
 this, that there was a Censer, peculiarly reserved for the use of that Place on the great Day of *Atonement*.
Vid. Buxtorf. exercit. 1. Hist. Arc. fœd. c. 5.

^m It is a matter of dispute among the *Jews*, how many things were reserv'd or laid up within the *Ark*
 of the Covenant. Of the *Testimony*, or two *Tables of the Decalogue*, there can be no doubt, these being ex-
 pressly order'd to be placed there at the time, when the making of the *Ark* was prescribed, *Exod.* xxv. 16.

See

rupted *Manna*, and Aaron's *Rod that budded*; which might fitly imply with what Care we ought to keep and observe God's Will and Commandments, and how punctually they were fulfilled by our Redeemer; how *Christ* is the *living Bread, which came down from Heaven*; figured only by the *Manna which fed the Fathers in the Wilderness*; and they who hold a constant and invisible Communion with him, are admitted to a farther Privilege, in partaking with him of the *hidden Manna*, typified by this incorruptible *Manna* kept within the *Veil*, of which none under the Law might eat: lastly, how his Priesthood is powerful and efficacious, so that tho' put to death in the Flesh, yet like *Aaron's Rod* he quicken'd and bore Fruit, and *remaineth a Priest for ever, after the power of an endless Life*.

Berriman.
Sermon
XXIII.
John
vi. 51.
Ver.
49, 58.
Rev.
ii. 17.
Heb. vii.
3, 16, 17.

(2.) SECONDLY, the next Instance, under which I proposed to consider the legal Ceremonies, was the Method of worshipping by *Sacrifice* and *Incense*. The Use of *Sacrifice* took not its rise from the *Mosaick Law*, but was handed down (as I observed formerly) from the time of Man's Apostasy, and without doubt owed its Original to some Divine Institution. But the *Law of Moses* methodized, and modell'd (as it were) anew the Use of *Sacrifices*; it distinguish'd them into several sorts and kinds of Oblation, and it increas'd the Solemnity of that ritual Worship, by the additional Prescription of many significant Ceremonies in the Circumstance and Manner of performing it.

SOME were made of the Fruits of the Earth, as Corn, and Wine, and Oil, which had the name of *Mincha* and *Nejek*, *Meat and Drink-Offerings*; others were taken from among Beasts or Birds, as Lambs and Kids, and Bullocks, Turtles and Pigeons, all of them clean Animals; or such as were allowed for Food, and required to be perfect and without blemish; and these, besides having their Blood partly sprinkled about the Altar, or towards the Mercy-Seat, and partly pour'd out at the bottom of the Altar, were either consumed whole, as *Burnt-Offerings*, or else had certain *Segments* offered in that Manner, whilst the rest was differently disposed, in proportion to the different nature of the *Sacrifice*, either burnt without the Camp, and afterwards without the City of *Jerusalem*, or else eaten by the Priests alone within the Holy Place, or partly by the Priests, or partly by the Offerers^a.

As to the special End or Design of them, they were either *eucharistical*, intended as Expressions of Thanksgiving, and Acknowledgments of Favours receiv'd; or *euctical*, to supplicate and pray for the Continuance or Increase of Blessings in the time to come; or lastly, *expiatory*, design'd to make Satisfaction and

See Deut. x. 5. To these some of the *Jews* would add the former Tables that were broken by *Moses*, when he was angry at the People's Idolatry, *Exod.* xxxii. 19. But there being nothing said of that Matter in Scripture, and it being doubtful whether the *Ark* was large enough to contain both, it is more likely these were preserved in some other Repository. The *Book of the Law* is required (*Deut.* xxxi. 26.) to be put in the side of the *Ark of the Covenant*: Which some understand of the inside of the *Ark*, but others of a small Box or Coffer fasten'd to the outside of it, of which we find mention *1 Sam.* vi. 8. So again, the *Pot of Manna* is order'd, *Exod.* xvi. 33. to be laid up before the Lord, the *Ark* not being made, nor the *Tables of the Covenant* deliver'd at that time: and then it is related proleptically in the Verse following, that *Aaron laid it up before the Testimony*, לפני העדות *i. e.* the *Tables of the Decalogue*. And in like manner *Aaron's Rod* is order'd to be brought before the *Testimony*, to be kept for a Token, &c. *Numb.* xvii. 12. From hence some would argue that these must be within the *Ark*, otherwise they could not be לפני in presence of the *Tables*. But if we consider that the *Tables* were in the *Ark*, and that from thence the *Ark* itself had sometimes the name of the *Testimony*, there will be no Absurdity in understanding any thing that was placed very near on the outside, to be before the *Testimony*. And thus all will agree well enough with what we read *1 Kings* viii. 9. that there was nothing in the *Ark*, save the two *Tables of Stone*, which *Moses* put there at *Horeb*. But to us *Christians* there remains a Difficulty from that Text of the Apostle, *Heb.* ix. 3, 4. After the second *Veil*, σκηνή, the *Tabernacle* which is called the *Holiest of all*: Which had the golden *Censer*, θυμιατόν, and the *Ark of the Covenant* overlaid round about with Gold, ἐν ᾗ ἦν ὁ χρυσεὶς ὕψος, wherein was the golden *Pot* that had *Manna*, and *Aaron's Rod* that budded, and the *Tables of the Covenant*. And for the Solution of this Difficulty, three ways have been attempted. (1.) Some would refer the ἵνα not to ὕψος the last Substantive, but to σκηνή the more remote, so as to imply only that these things belong'd all to the *Sanctum Sanctorum*. (2.) Others would have the Preposition ἐν taken with the same latitude as the Preposition ἐν in *Hebrew*, so as not necessarily to signify in, but with, near, or hard by. (3.) Others take *St. Paul* to speak of the Time when the *Tabernacle* was first built in the *Wilderness*, when, for the conveniency of moving from place to place, they suppose these things might be put within the *Ark*: whereas the *Book of Kings* speaks of it when brought into the Temple of *Solomon*, where it was to remain fixed and immoveable. Vid. Buxtorf. exercit. 1. Historia arcæ fæderis, cap. 3.

^a See the farther Description of Sacrificial Rites either in the Books of *Moses*, or in *Outram de Sacrific.*

Berriman
Sermon
XXIII.

and Atonement for Sin, for such Sin namely, as was not in course of Law necessarily punishable on the Offender in his own Person, but was allowed to be transferred by solemn Imposition of Hands upon the *Victim's* Head, which was thereby substituted in the room of the Offender, to stand in his stead, and endure Punishment for him.

SOME of their Sacrifices seem to have partook of every kind, though from their principal View they are referred to one rather than another. And of all of them it is observed, that they had something of an *expiatory* Quality or Virtue in them, insomuch that the Burnt-Offerings themselves are said to *make Atonement*^o; from whence they are represented to have made a *sweet Savour unto the Lord*, as it were intended to appease his Wrath, and render him gracious and propitious. The same is to be argued from the Ceremony of Sprinkling the Blood, which was used in these, as well as in the *Sin*, and *Trespass-Offerings*; the declared Use whereof was altogether *expiatory*, according to the Exposition given of this Matter in the Law it self. *For the Life of the Flesh is in the Blood, and I have given it to you* (says God) *upon the Altar, to make an Atonement for your Souls; for it is the Blood that makes an Atonement for the Soul.*

Lev. i. 9,
13, 17, &
alibi.

Levit.
xvii. 11.

Heb. x. 4.
Psal. xlix.
7, 8.

Now that these had no real, but only a symbolical Efficacy in the Atonement of Sin, will appear both from the Nature of the Thing it self, and from the Terms of the *Mosaick* Institution. *It is not possible that the Blood of Bulls and of Goats should take away Sins.* If no Man may deliver his Brother, or his own Soul from Death, much less may that be expected from brute Beasts, who have neither Dignity of Nature, nor Purposes of Obedience, to give Merit and Value to their Sufferings. The Matters to be expiated, were generally either legal Impurities, or involuntary Trespasses; and if some wilful Immoralities were also allowed the Benefit of Expiation, they were such as were done with less aggravating Circumstances, whilst the more grievous and presumptuous Violations of Duty were required to be punished with the Death of the Offender himself, who had no *special Sacrifice* appointed for him. I say, no *special Sacrifice*; because where the Matter was concealed, or the Law not duly executed, it does not appear that such Offenders stood excluded from all Benefit of that general Expiation which was annually made on the great Day of Atonement, as well by the scape Goat, as by bloody Sacrifices, extending to *all the Iniquities of the Children of Israel, and all their Transgressions in all their Sins*¹. But then the having no express Application to such Cases, and leaving them exposed to the Rigour of the Law, is an Argument of the weakness of legal Sacrifices, and the need of some other more perfect Sacrifice, to purge us from all Sin and Uncleaness. The *Priest* and the *Altar*, appointed for such Atonements, were manifestly chargeable with Imperfection, and wanted to be cleansed and purified themselves.

AND after all, the Effect was plainly symbolical, and such as, without a typical Meaning attributed to it, fell short of the Design of Expiation. For, from what was the Offender delivered by these legal Sacrifices? Was it not from temporal Death, and the Danger of being cut off from the Congregation? And to what Privilege was he restored or entitled? Was it not to the Privilege of appearing before God, and joining in the publick Worship? What was the Purifying or Sanctification consequent upon such Atonements? Was it not (as the Apostle styles it) *the purifying of the Flesh*; an outward and a transient Efficacy, which could not reach to *purge their Consciences from dead Works*? And why was all this necessary to be often repeated, but because it had no solid or permanent Effect, nor deserved to find Acceptance of it self? But if we take it in a symbolical or typical View, then it leads us to acknowledge the Benefit of *Christ's* Redemption, and those invaluable Privileges he has purchased

Heb. ix.
13, 14.

^o Levit. i. 4. — xvi. 24. And so Ezek. xlv. 15, 17. *The Sin-Offering, and the Meat-Offering, and the Burnt-Offering, and the Peace-Offerings* are all said to *make Reconciliation for the House of Israel.*

¹ Levit. xvi. 21. See above, Sermon. XXI. p. 755, &c.

purchased for us. That temporal Death, which was denounced by the Law, will denote that everlasting Punishment, to which Sinners are exposed as such. The legal Impurity, which wanted to be cleansed, will denote the Defilement and Impurity of Sin. The outward Admission to the Service of the Temple, will denote our spiritual Privilege of Access unto God, as well in the present Ordinances of his Church, as in the future Inheritance of his eternal Kingdom. And all this being perform'd by the Oblation of *Sacrifices*, clean and perfect in their kind, will import our being *redeem'd with the precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot; who thro' the eternal Spirit offer'd himself without spot to God, for a sweet-smelling Savour, and entred not into the Holy Places made with hands, which are the Figures of the true, but into Heaven it self, that true Tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not Man, there to plead the Merit of his Sacrifice, and make for ever Intercession for us.*

Berriman.
Sermon
XXIII.

1 Pet.
i. 19.
Heb.
ix. 14.
Eph. v. 2.
Heb.
ix. 24.
Heb.
viii. 2.
Heb.
vii. 25.

THE Parallel might here be run throughout the several Circumstances of the *Jewish Sacrifices*, and the burning of their *Incense*; in agreement with which it might be shown, how *Christ's Blood* was shed, and his whole Body extended on the Cross, without the Gates of *Jerusalem*; answering at once to the whole *Burnt-Offering* consumed upon the *Altar*, and to those *Sin-Offerings* which were mostly burnt without the Camp or the City: how his crucified Body was presented to the Father as a full and perfect *Sacrifice*, which needing therefore to be no more repeated, he continues in that holy Place to which he then ascended, and *for ever sits down at the right hand of God*, representing there continually the Atonement he has made, and recommending us and all our Wants to the Divine Favour: how, lastly, his Body and Blood are, in the Sacrament of the *Eucharist*, mystically dispensed for the Food and Repast of faithful Souls, to nourish and sustain them to eternal Life. But as there can be little disagreement about these Circumstances, when the main Doctrine of *Sacrifice* is confirm'd and establish'd; so some of them will have occasion to be farther display'd, when I proceed to the third Instance under which I was to consider the mystical View and Meaning of the *Levitical Worship*; and that respects the *Administrator*, which was in some cases the *High Priest* alone, and in the rest any of the Sons of *Aaron*. But of this, together with the Inferences to be drawn from this Subject (God willing) at another Opportunity.

Heb.
x. 12.

SERMON XXIV.

The Aptness and Significancy of the typical Interpretation of the Law, with Inferences from the whole.

Preached *November* the 6th, 1732.

The Eighth SERMON on this TEXT.

JOHN i. 17.

For the Law was given by Moses, but Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ.

Berriman.
Sermon
XXIV.

THE *Antitbesis* which is stated in the Text, between the *Law* of *Moses* and the Gospel, has been formerly explain'd, and many Arguments produced to shew that the *Mosaick Law* was not designed to have an universal or perpetual Obligation, but serv'd as a preparatory Discipline to lead to the Gospel, and terminate in the Days of the *Messiah*. Both which Heads do naturally lead us to a third, *viz.* to point out and explain how it serv'd this Purpose by its Types and Prefigurations, which foreshew'd the Office and Character of the *Messiah*, and made such application of his Benefits, as was suited to that Age of the World, and proportioned to the Faith and Sincerity of its Observers.

FOR the clearing of this, I first explain'd the Grounds of such typical Interpretation, and then removed the principal Difficulties and Objections that may seem to lie against it. After which I proceeded, in the last Place, to shew under some obvious Instances, how apt and natural this Method of Interpretation is, and with what Beauty and Significancy it displays and unfolds to us the ancient Institution. The Instances proposed were such as relate to the essential Parts of the *Levitical* Worship, and almost the whole Exercise of ritual Religion; namely, the Place of Worship, which was the *Tabernacle* first, and afterwards the *Temple*; the Method of worshipping, by *Sacrifice* and *Incense*; and the Administrator, which was in some cases the *High Priest* alone, and in the rest any of the Sons of *Aaron*.

THE two former of these were proposed and stated in the last Discourse. From whence I go on in order to the

(3.) THIRD, namely the Administrator of the legal Worship, which was in some cases the *High Priest* alone, and in the rest any of the Sons of *Aaron*.

IT has been formerly observed, how strictly the *Levitical Priesthood* was confined to the Family of *Aaron*^a: and as this did in one view figure out all the sincere and faithful Members of *Christ*, who are chosen and set apart out of the rest of Mankind, to be a *Royal Priesthood*, offering up spiritual Sacrifices; so more especially did it in another view figure out *Christ* their Head, making a perfect *Expiation* for Sin, and *mediating* between God and Men. The *Sacrifice* he offer'd was his human Nature paying a perfect Obedience to God, and submitting even unto Death. For as the *Law* could do nothing of it self, by its own Virtue and Power; so it was forced to lay together a Variety of Figures, which, under different Views, might represent to the Church the one great and long *Antitype*, who is himself our *Altar, Priest, and Sacrifice*.

HE was not himself descended of the Line of *Aaron*, but *sprang out of the Tribe of Judah*, of which *Tribe Moses spake nothing concerning Priesthood*: to import that his *Priesthood* is not of the same Order, nor tied to the same external Rules of Worship. But there were such Lines of resemblance between the Sons of *Aaron* and him, as were fit to be observed between the Type and the Reality. The Descent from *Aaron* was not of it self sufficient, except they were also descended by such honourable Marriage as the Law had strictly prescribed to that Family, to legitimate their sacred Services, and qualify them to approach unto God. This shadow'd out, as human and earthly things can do it, the Divine Original and Generation of the Son of God, together with that immaculate Conception of a Virgin, whereby he submitted to be made the Son of Man, *glorifying not himself to be made an High Priest, but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee*.

THE *Aaronical Priests* were also required to be free from any Blemish or Defect of Body, as well as possess'd of a religious Frame and Habit of Mind, which did but faintly represent the unexampled Purity and Perfections of our great *High Priest, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from Sinners*, having no such *Infirmity* as the *High Priests* of the *Law*, which should make him need to offer up *Sacrifice* for any Sins of his own, or daily ones for other People; but having made a full Reconciliation by the Sacrifice of himself, and remaining perfect, and consecrated for evermore.

THE Method of consecrating and appointing the *legal Priests*, was also calculated to figure out the Excellency and Perfection of our great *High Priest*, who had all that internal Virtue and Sanctity, which they could only signify by outward Ceremony. The external *washing with Water*, at the same time that it upbraided their natural Impurity, did withal betoken the necessity of pure and unspotted Holiness in him who should approach unto God. To their figurative Services a figurative Cleansing might suffice. But the spiritual Service of the New Testament required a Priest that should be absolutely clean, thro' whom we are enabled to draw nigh unto God, having our *Consciences purged from dead Works*.

AGAIN, the putting on of sacred Vestments was another Rite of Consecration, which, being partly made of *Linen*, were fit to represent that perfect and unspotted Righteousness of *Christ*, for which his faithful Members are accepted of the Father, who are therefore said to *put on Christ*, and to be *arrayed in fine Linen, clean and white, which is the Righteousness of Saints*: and partly (in the *High Priest*) being adorn'd with Gold and Gems, and curious Workmanship, inscribed with the Character of *Holiness*, and the Names of the twelve Tribes of *Israel*, did significantly figure out the transcendent Glory and Dignity of our Redeemer, communicated in a fit proportion to his faithful Members, who are in him a *royal Priesthood*, together with his Vigilance and Care over them, consider'd as the *Israel of God*.

THE *Unction* of the holy *Oil*, and that poured out in great plenty and abundance, did not only signify the Graces of the Spirit dispens'd to the Faithful in the Gospel Times, but him, in a more eminent manner, who is emphatically styled the *MESSIAH*, or *Anointed of the Lord*; ANOINTED with the *Oil*.

Berriman.
Sermon
XXIV.

1 Pet.
ii. 9.

Heb.
vii. 14.

Lev. xxi.
7, &c.

Heb. v. 5.

Lev. xxi.
17, &c.
Heb. vii.
26, 27, 28.

Exod.
xxix. 4.

Heb.
ix. 14.
Exod.
xxix. 5.
&c.

Rom.
xiii. 14.
Gal. iii.
27.
Rev.
xix. 8.

1 Pet.
ii. 9.

Exod.
xxix. 7.
Psal.
cxxxiii. 2.
Psal. xlv. 7.
Heb. i. 9.

^a See Serm. XX. p. 748, 749.

Berriman. Oil of Gladness above his Fellows, having the Spirit imparted without measure unto him, and being solemnly appointed to those high Offices which belong to him as Mediator.

Exod. ONCE more, in the first Consecration of the Family of *Aaron*, there were
xxix. 1, Sacrifices offered, first for *Expiation* of their Sins, then for *Burnt-Offering*,
2, 3. or Dedication of them wholly to Divine Service; and lastly, for *Peace-Offer-*
10, —14. *ing*, admitting them (as it were) into the Family, and to the Table of their
15, —18. God. In these *Moses*, acting the Part of a Priest, was an illustrious Type of
Verse *Christ*, as well in granting a Divine Commission to the Ministers of the New
19, —28. Testament, as in sanctifying all the faithful Members of his Church, and qua-
 lifying them to draw near unto God.

So far of the Appointment of the Priests: The Office of the Persons thus appointed, was chiefly exercised in *Sacrifice* and *Incense*. By Sacrifice, I mean as well those *Meat* and *Drink-Offerings*, which were either joined with *Victims*, or separately offered unto God; and that whether burnt upon the Altar, or otherwise consumed by the Priests; as also those *Victims* themselves appointed by the Law, to be first presented and slain by those who offered them, then to have the Blood and Segments laid about the Altar by the Priests, sprinkled and waved before the Lord, as the supreme Governor of Heaven and Earth; and burnt, lastly, by the sacred Fire, which was continually preserved upon the Altar for that Purpose. And by Incense, I mean that sacred Composition, which was prescribed to *Moses* in the Book of *Exodus*, which was as well to be burnt daily, every Morning and Evening, on the golden Altar
Exod. of *Incense*, as annually with more Solemnity on the great Day of Expiation.
xxx. 34.
Ver. 7, 8.

IT has been shewn formerly, ^b how these Rites prefigured the Sacrifice and Intercession of *Christ*: But since we are now considering him under the Character of the Priest that offered it, it may be material for us, without expatiating on every Circumstance in the ordinary Ministrations, to attend particularly to those more solemn Circumstances with which the Oblation of the *High Priest* was performed on that Day of annual Atonement.

AT that time, besides the two Rams for Burnt-Offering, and the Scape-Goat, which was sent alive into the Wilderness, there was a Bullock and a Goat appointed for Sin-Offerings; of whose Blood the High Priest, having opened the Veil of the most holy Place, sprinkled before the Mercy-Seat, proceeding then to consume their Fat upon the Altar, and send their Carcases to be burnt without the Camp, or Gates of *Jerusalem*.
Lev. xvi.
3, —28.

How apposite and beautiful is the Application of all this to the *Christian* Scheme! The Blood, as being the Life of the Beast, might fitly figure out the human or reasonable Soul. And therefore as *Christ*, when considered under the Notion of a *Victim*, is said to shed his Blood for us, so when described as a rational Agent, he is said to *pour out his Soul unto Death*. At the same Instant therefore that he expired, that his Blood was shed, that his sacred Body hung extended on the Altar of the Cross; at the same Instant whilst it remained lifeless without the Gates of *Jerusalem*, the *Veil of the Temple* was rent in twain; to import that what had antiently been figured out by those Mysteries was now accomplished; that his Divine Nature (which acted in this Matter as the Priest) putting off the *Veil* of Flesh, and carrying his Soul within the *Veil* of Heaven, presented it before the Father as the Price of our Redemption, the Solution of that Ransom he had paid for Sinners.
Iſa. liii. 12.
Mat.
xxvii. 51.

THE Ceremony of the High Priest, performed once every Year, was fitly expressive of this Atonement of *Christ*, made once for all: which being absolute and perfect, his Body was not, like the legal Victims, to remain under the Sentence of Death, nor therefore to be burnt and utterly consumed (as if, like them, he had contracted a Defilement not to be removed) but to testify the
 Con-

^b See Serm. XXIII.

Conquest he had made by a speedy Resurrection to Life, and Exaltation to the highest Glory. Then was his whole Humanity presented before God, and the Heavens have received him, not only as our Priest to offer and intercede, but also as the Lamb that had been slain for us. It is in the Continuance of this Oblation, that his Intercession consists; whereby he makes Application of his own Merit to obtain the Pardon and Forgiveness of our Sins, and withal to recommend our Addresses at the Throne of Grace, represented by the *Incense* of the *High Priest*, offered as the Symbol of the Peoples Prayers: In allusion whereunto, the great *Angel* of the Covenant is mentioned by St. *John*, to have a golden Censer, and much Incense, that he should offer it with the Prayers of all Saints, upon the golden Altar which was before the Throne. And so the Smoke of the Incense which came with the Prayers of the Saints, is said to have ascended up before God, out of the Angel's Hand.

Berriman.
Sermon
XXIV.

Rev. viii.
3, 4.

I MIGHT easily run the Parallel between *Christ's Priesthood* and *Aaron's* to a greater length: But this may suffice briefly to illustrate how commodious a Sense arises from the *Christian Exposition* of the ancient Ceremonies. Which being added to the other Arguments taken from the Drift and Genius of the Old Testament, and enforced by the Miracles and various kinds of Evidence, by which the Writings of the New Testament, and consequently this Exposition is supported; there can be no Reason to reject a Method of interpreting so amply recommended, both by its internal and external Evidence. If there might be any doubt of some Particulars, when taken by themselves, yet when the whole System is survey'd together, so harmonious and uniform in all its Parts, displaying such Beauty in the ancient Institutions, as well as giving Testimony to the Doctrine of the Gospel; and all this confirmed by every sort of Evidence by which the Books of the New Testament themselves are attested and approved: there can be after this no reasonable Doubt, as to the main View and Purport of the Whole, which was clearly calculated to lead Men to the Knowledge of *Christ*, and had no farther Use or Significancy after his Appearing.

I HAVE not on this Occasion particularly stated the Evidences of the New Testament, which do at the same time confirm the Exposition given of the Old; but have referr'd to them in general, as belonging to another Field of Controversy, which has been fully and satisfactorily occupied by other Hands. What I pretend to, is, that there are reasonable Inducements to acquiesce in this Exposition of the Old Testament, even whilst we abstract from the Authority of the New; but when that is taken into the Account, what was rational before, becomes certain and incontestible. They are Arguments which mutually add weight and lustre to each other: for as the Authority of the New Testament confirms this Exposition of the Old; so this Exposition, when shewn to be rational and consistent, prepares us to receive the New Testament it self with greater Reverence.

HERE, therefore, I conclude my Subject, as having only undertaken to propose those Evidences of the *Christian Religion*, which are to be gathered from the Old Testament. And though in clearing of them it was material to alledge the Exposition given in the Books of the New, yet the Authority of those Books is a Point I have supposed as proved by others, to avoid the tediousness of launching into another Part of the Dispute, which has been clearly settled by very able Pens, and may be easily done again, if it should be thought fit to rest the Merits of the Cause upon that Issue. But since some late Champions for Infidelity have chose to argue from the Genius of the Old Testament, and reject the Gospel Exposition of it as a novel Conceit, cook'd up in the Declension of the *Jewish Commonwealth*, and utterly unknown to former Ages; I hope enough has been said for the refuting of this Calumny, and shewing, that however the fuller Knowledge of this Mystery might be reserved for Gospel Times, yet some Notice of so great a Truth had been dispensed

Berriman.
Sermon
XXIV.

opened from the Beginning, and was gradually opened more and more through the successive Ages and Periods of Time.

I SHALL add nothing but a few Reflections upon the View which has been taken of the *Christian* Scheme, as taught from the Beginning. And,

Inference 1. FIRST then, we learn by this Account, what was just now mentioned, that the *Christian* Religion is greatly slander'd and misrepresented by them, who would suggest it to be a novel Invention, grounded on some modern Prejudices of the *Jews*, of which *Christ* and his Apostles took advantage to build the Fabrick of *Christianity*. We see that the Scheme was always in the Counsels and View of Providence, communicated in some measure from the Time of Man's Apostasy, but gradually opened as the Time of Accomplishment drew nearer on, till at last it was fulfilled in the Event, and revealed with all that Lustre and Advantage, which now recommends it in the Gospel of *Christ*.

WE may allow our Adversaries, in this Sense, that *Christianity* is nearly *as old as the Creation*; i. e. that it was immediately consequent upon the Fall, when that great Redemption, which is the Doctrine of the Gospel, was originally promised and ensured to Mankind; though not so clearly described as by ensuing Revelations, nor so openly display'd with all its Circumstances. But when they mean by that Expression, that there is nothing to be receiv'd in *Christianity*, but what necessarily results from the apparent Nature of Things, and the Reason of Mankind without help of Revelation; their Conclusion then out-runs their Premises, and the Doctrine of the Gospel is too well supported, to be shaken by the Efforts of their feeble Malice.

SUCH resolute Attachment to the Cause of Infidelity proceeds not (we see) from any defect of Evidence on the side of Revelation, but must owe its Origin to some Enormity in the Minds and Hearts of those who are possess'd of it. There must be first *an evil heart of unbelief*; either a fond Conceit of natural Abilities, which disdains to seek for the Instruction of a superior Guide, or a vain Affectation to appear considerable, by opposing and unhinging what is settled and receiv'd; or lastly, the Dominion of some worldly or sensual Affection, which has an Interest to serve in the Ruins of reveal'd Religion, that whilst the Rule of Action is made obscure and precarious, it may find its refuge in Licentiousness. What Zeal soever our Advocates for *Deism* pretend for moral Virtue in the general, yet when they come to speak out their Sentiments as to particular Virtues, we find they have not been asham'd to patronize the foulest of Vices as agreeable to natural Principles; and then we need not wonder to see their Doctrine prevail among the abandon'd and licentious.

Inf. 2. SECONDLY, we may learn our Duty to attend with seriousness and diligence to the Scriptures of the Old Testament, as an important Enforcement and Confirmation of the *Christian* Religion.

THE Rites of the *Mosaick Law*, being of a typical or symbolical kind, and the Predictions of the Prophets being many of them couch'd in lofty and figurative Expressions, and the rest, (as relating to things in which free Agents were to be concern'd) being less explicit than the Gospel, which contains an History of things that are past: it will require much Care and Observation to lay together different and scatter'd Passages, to consider the different Modes and Forms of Speech, to examine the Applications made of them by Sacred Writers, and to compare these previous Notices of the Old Dispensation, with their actual Accomplishment under the New. But since the Meaning conceal'd under those ancient Oracles, and the Point to which they direct, is a Matter of the greatest Moment and Importance; such Care and Observation will be well bestow'd, and find ample amends for any Time or Pains that shall be employed therein. They were anciently but *as a Light shining in a dark place*, and gave but distant and obscure Hints of future Verities. They did well however, who gave heed

2 Pet.
i. 19.

to

to them *till the Day* should *dawn* to greater Light; and even now, when produced since the Accomplishment, they do greatly illustrate the Brightness of the Gospel it self, as their Meaning is more clearly fix'd, their Tendency more evident and undeniable. Berriman.
Sermon
XXIV.

A SPECIMEN hereof has been drawn out in the preceeding Discourses, which have shewn the gradual opening of the *Christian* Scheme thro' the successive Periods of Time: and though all Particulars have not been taken into this Account, yet enough has been produced to shew the Tendency and Genius of the rest. They who have Leisure and Capacity for such Enquiries, will do well to employ their Time and Studies to that purpose, and communicate their Observations for the Improvement and Benefit of other People. And all of us should join in the most humble Applications at the Throne of Grace, that God would be pleased to *open* our *Eyes*, that we may more and more *behold* these wondrous things in his Divine Law. Psal.
cxix. 18.

Inf. 3. THIRDLY, from all this we may derive the Benefit of Confirmation and Stedfastness in our Religion. For what can give us greater Satisfaction and Comfort in it, than to see that the *Christian* Scheme was always in the Eye of Providence, that the Substance of it was reveal'd and taught from the Beginning, and all the successive Revelations from God were pointed and directed towards it? This shews us, that we are in the proper Method of Acceptance, in that way which was always proposed in the Divine Counsels, and in some measure disclosed, but in the Fulness of Time was more clearly reveal'd and manifested, to the Sons of Men. This may instruct us to *hold fast the Profession of our Faith without wavering*; and so long as the Scheme in general appears so well proportion'd and adapted to former Revelations, not to be shock'd or startled with the Cavils of every nibbling Objector, who shall aim to puzzle us with Difficulties in some particular Cases, without regarding the beauteous Harmony and Analogy of the whole Scheme taken together. Heb. x. 23.

It may be easy for Men of Parts and Subtilty, to represent particular Matters in such Light, or rather in such Obscurity, as shall make them appear disproportion'd to the rest, till Men of Skill and Abilities shall take the Pains to search them to the bottom, and detect the Fallacy. But let not those of less Penetration and Discernment be startled or stagger'd with Difficulties, till the Objectors have deliver'd in their whole Scheme, and assign'd some other View or Interpretation of the ancient Oracles, which they will abide by as their own Standard, without shifting the Scene continually, as if they aim'd at nothing else but to plant their Cannon of Objections. After this, it may be proper to consider and compare both Schemes together, to examine which is most uniform and consistent in it self, which most displays the Honour and Majesty of the Author, and is best calculated for the Benefit of Men. But till that be done, the generality of People may be satisfied with that Account which has been given of the general drift and purport of the ancient Scriptures, and make no doubt but, where the whole appears so harmonious and uniform, a fair Solution may be given of particular Difficulties, by them who have Capacity and Leisure for Application to such Studies. It is in the mean time a reasonable Prejudice against all Objectors, that they have no other Interpretation to substitute in its room which will stand the Test of our Enquiries, or recommend it self by the Consistency and Harmony of all its Parts.

Inf. 4. FOURTHLY, I shall add but one more Reflection on this Defence of *Christianity*, which is gather'd from the Study of the Sacred Oracles; namely, that whilst we profess to be hereby persuaded of the Truth of its Doctrines, we be also careful to obey its Precepts, and adorn the Religion we pretend to believe, by a correspondent Practice and Behaviour. To boast of the Light which shines around us by the help of Revelation, and yet continue to habituate our selves to the unfruitful Works of Darknefs, is to live in perpetual contradiction

Berriman. tradition to our selves, and be influenced by those divided Affections, which
Sermon in the Style of Scripture may be term'd a *double Heart* or *Mind*, as implying
XXIV. a Conviction of the Truth of Religion, and therefore some faint Desire to obey it, but yet a stronger Inclination and Attachment to Vice; which therefore
1 Chron. will be sure to keep possession of the Heart, and allow no other than an out-
xii. 33. ward and a partial Obedience.
Psal. xii. 2.
James i. 8.
—iv. 8.

WHEN this Repugnancy appears, there is nothing can give greater Scandal to the Adversaries of the Truth, or tend more to harden them in Infidelity, Or even if it be more artfully cover'd and conceal'd, it must at least be useless and insignificant to our selves. For however by an appearing Strictness and Severity we may gain perhaps the popular Applause, and impose on Men who search no deeper than the Surface of things; yet God *seeth not as Man seeth*, and therefore our Blessed Saviour taught this Followers, that in order to approve themselves to him, their *Righteousness* must exceed the superficial *Righteousness of Scribes and Pharisees*, and that without that Condition we *shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*. No Artifice can screen, no Colouring can so disguise us, but that he who made us will discern the most secret Devices of our Breasts, and condemn the privatest Sinner to a publick Punishment.

To direct our Conduct, and prevent any Pretence of Ignorance, he has given the most ample and sufficient notice of his Will, not only by the dimmer Principle of Reason, that Law or Index of Duty written in our Hearts, but by the brighter and more shining Lustre of his Revelation, added as a *Lantern to our Feet, and a Light unto our Paths*. No other Terms of Acceptance may we frame to our selves, but those which our Redeemer has already appointed and prescribed to us. No other Hopes may we conceive of our future Admission to his glorious Kingdom, but what are founded in his Promises who merited it for us, and consequently in our own Observance of those Conditions upon which his Promises are made, in the due Regulation both of our Faith and Practice, upon the Standard of that Revelation we enjoy of the Will of our Father which is in Heaven, in such a conscientious Discharge of our Duty towards God, such Justice and Charity to Men, such personal Purity in Body and Mind, that *denying all Ungodliness and worldly Lusts*, we may be said to have our *Conversation* (or our Citizenship) *in Heaven*; and as the Heirs of that Kingdom, where nothing unhallow'd or unclean can enter, *to live soberly, righteously and godly in the World*: All which, tho' not proposed as the proper or meritorious Cause of our Salvation, is yet wisely made the indispensable Condition of obtaining it; that by conforming our selves to the Divine Likeness, we may in some degree be qualified for that transcendent Happiness, which will consist in the Enjoyment of God to all Eternity, thro' the alone Merits and Mediation of *Jesus Christ* our Saviour; to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all Honour and Glory, now and henceforth for evermore. *Amen.*



F I N I S.

A T A B L E

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TEXTS of SCRIPTURE Preached upon
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| | TEXTS. | Vol. | Page. | | TEXTS. | Vol. | Page. |
|---------------|----------------------|------|-----------------------|-----------------|------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <i>Psalms</i> | X. 4. — — | I. | 356, 365, 375. | <i>Romans</i> | III. 31. — — | I. | 669, 681. |
| | XIV. 1. — — | I. | 1. | | VII. 24, 25. — — | III. | 595, 602. |
| <i>Isai.</i> | II. 3. — — | III. | 87, 97, 106. | | X. 11. — — | II. | 433. |
| | V. 20. — — | III. | 349. | <i>1 Cor.</i> | I. 21. — — | { II. 495, 503. | |
| <i>Jer.</i> | IX. 24. — — | I. | 405, 414, 425. | | — 22, 23, 24, 25. — — | I. | 631, 644, 657. |
| <i>Matt.</i> | I. 1. — — | III. | 626. | | — 25, form. part. — — | I. | 812. |
| | XI. 14. — — | III. | 715. | | — 25, latter part. — — | I. | 823. |
| | XXIV. 15. — — | III. | 699, 707. | | II. 12, 13, 14. — — | I. | 737, 749, 760, 776, 787. |
| <i>Luke</i> | I. 32, 33. — — | III. | 661, 669, 677, 684. | <i>Galat.</i> | I. 8, 9. — — | I. | 237. |
| | VII. 23. — — | III. | 143. | | III. 16. — — | III. | 635, 643, 651. |
| | XVI. 29, 30, 31. — — | I. | { 529, 539, 551, 562, | | | | |
| | — 31. — — | I. | 574, 588, 602, 613. | <i>1 Theff.</i> | V. 21. — — | { II. { 731, 739, 748, 758, | |
| | XXIV. 25, 26. — — | III. | 691. | | | { III. { 768, 779, 789, 797, | |
| <i>John</i> | I. 1. — — | II. | 522, 532. | | | { 804, 813, 821, 831, | |
| | — 17. — — | III. | { 722, 729, 738, 746, | | | { 840, 850, 855, 862. | |
| | — 17. — — | III. | 754, 762, 769, 778. | | | III. 286, 293, 299, 306. | |
| | III. 2. — — | III. | 115, 124. | <i>1 Tim.</i> | I. 15. — — | I. | { 439, 449, 460, 470. |
| | — 16, 17. — — | I. | 515. | | IV. 8. — — | III. | { 481, 493, 504. |
| | IV. 24. — — | I. | 386, 396. | <i>2 Tim.</i> | I. 10. — — | I. | 279. |
| | V. 39. — — | I. | 247. | | | | |
| | VI. 45. — — | I. | 429. | <i>Titus</i> | I. 2, 3. — — | II. | 694. |
| | — 68, 69. — — | II. | 512. | | | | |
| | XV. 24. — — | III. | 357. | <i>Heb.</i> | I. 1, 2. — — | { I. { 155, 164, 176, 186, | |
| <i>Acts</i> | XIV. 15, 16, 17. — — | I. | 52, 63, 75. | | | { III. { 196, 207, 218, 228. | |
| | XVII. 11, 12. — — | I. | 256. | | II. 3, 4. — — | III. | 609, 617. |
| | — 23. — — | II. | 201. | | III. 12. — — | III. | 133. |
| | — 27, 28. — — | I. | 12, 22, 32, 42. | | XI. 6. — — | I. | 3, 11. |
| | — 28. — — | III. | 314, 321, 328, 336. | | | III. 281. | |
| <i>Romans</i> | I. 19, 20, 21. — — | III. | 50, 59, 69. | <i>2 Pet.</i> | I. 16. — — | III. | 21, 30, 40. |
| | — 20, 21. — — | III. | 78. | | — 19. — — | I. | 383, 391. |
| | — 22. — — | III. | 342. | | | II. | 707, 721. |
| | — 28. — — | II. | 541. | | III. 14. — — | II. | 265. |
| | | | | <i>1 John</i> | V. 3. — — | I. | 557. |
| | | | | | | | 799. |

An INDEX of the several TEXTS of SCRIPTURE Explained, or Illustrated, in these *Three Volumes* of SERMONS.

| GENESIS. | | GENESIS. | | GENESIS. | |
|--------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| Chap. and Ver. | Vol. and Page. | Chap. and Ver. | Vol. and Page. | Chap. and Ver. | Vol. and Page. |
| I. 1. — | I. 769. | VI. 4. — | II. 668. | XIX. 1. — | II. 525. |
| — 2. — | II. 148. | — 5. — | I. 161. | — 12, 13, 15, 24, }
25, 27, 28. } | II. 303. |
| — 3. — | II. 570. | — 5, 12. — | II. 842, 843. | — 24. — | I. 769. |
| — 4. — | III. 182. | — 6. — | I. 454. | XX. 6, &c. — | I. 522. |
| — 9. — | II. 586. | — 9. — | I. 517. | — 10, 11. — | III. 24. |
| — 11. — | II. 585. III. 237. | — 11. — | III. 621. | — 13. — | I. 769. |
| — 12. — | III. 183, 193. | — 17. — | II. 290, 617. | XXI. 1, — 5. — | II. 300. |
| — 26. — | { I. 769.
II. 359, 658. | VII. 2, 8. — | III. 625. | — 10, 11, 12. — | III. 639. |
| — 28. — | I. 51. | — 4. — | II. 290. | — 13, 18. — | II. 294. |
| — 28, 29. — | III. 205. | — 10, &c. — | II. 291. | — 18. — | II. 171. |
| — 31. — | { I. 78, 85.
III. 173, 186. | — 15, 21, 22. — | II. 617. | — 33. — | III. 733. |
| II. 2. — | I. 170. | — 17, &c. — | II. 291. | — 34. — | II. 301. |
| — 2, 3. — | II. 725. | VIII. 20. — | III. 625. | XXII. 12. — | II. 525. |
| — 7. — | { II. 617.
III. 183, 200,
[235, 619.] | — 21. — | { II. 842.
III. 624. | — 17. — | { I. 639.
II. 294. |
| — 8, 9, 15, 16, 17, 25. — | III. 253. | — 21, 22. — | II. 292. | — 18. — | { II. 175, 274,
296.
III. 636, 637,
705. |
| — 9, 16. — | III. 255. | — 22. — | I. 82. | XXIII. 3, 4, 17. — | II. 301. |
| — 12, &c. — | II. 716. | IX. 1, 2, 3. — | III. 205. | XXIV. 7. — | II. 297. |
| — 14. — | I. 204. | — 8, &c. — | II. 292. | XXV. 22, 23. — | II. 305. |
| — 16, 17. — | I. 455. [390.] | — 20. — | III. 621. | — 23. — | III. 644. |
| — 17. — | { II. 356, 358,
III. 200, 456. | — 25. — | III. 527, 623. | XXVI. 2, 3. — | II. 301. |
| — 23. — | III. 618. | — 25, 26, 27. — | { II. 293.
III. 622. | — 3. — | II. 171. |
| III. 1, — 5. — | III. 505. | — 26. — | III. 525. | — 4. — | { II. 175, 274,
294, 297.
III. 644. |
| — 1, 4, 5, 6. — | III. 255. | XI. 7. — | { I. 769.
II. 527. | XXVII. 27, 28, }
29, 39, 40. } | II. 305. |
| — 2. — | I. 769. | — 30. — | II. 299. | — 39, 40. — | III. 644. |
| — 5. — | III. 504, 584. | XII. 1. — | II. 294. | XXVIII. 4. — | { II. 301.
III. 644. |
| — 6. — | III. 506. | — 2, 7. — | II. 299. | — 13. — | II. 171. |
| — 7. — | III. 253, 510. | — 3. — | { II. 175, 295.
III. 636. | — 14. — | { II. 175, 294,
III. 644. [296] |
| — 8. — | { I. 452, 453.
III. 256. | — 7. — | II. 297. | XXIX. 27. — | II. 174, 184. |
| — 8, 9, 10. — | I. 445. | XIII. 10. — | I. 119. | XXXI. 24, 30. — | II. 525. |
| — 14. — | III. 613. | — 14, 15, 17. — | II. 297. | XXXII. 12. — | II. 294. |
| — 14, 15. — | { II. 287.
III. 515. | — 15. — | III. 638. | XXXV. 11. — | II. 294. |
| — 14, 15, 16, 19. — | III. 612. | — 16. — | II. 294. | — 12. — | II. 297. |
| — 15. — | { I. 452, 463, 718
II. 170, 274,
[524, 553.]
III. 614, 705. | XIV. 18. — | III. 749. | — 16, — 19. — | II. 280. |
| — 16, — 19. — | II. 286. | XV. 1. — | II. 171, 302. | XXXVI. 6, 7, 8. — | II. 307. |
| — 17. — | III. 183, 193, 237. | — 1, — 4. — | II. 299, 300. | — 7. — | II. 301. |
| — 17, 18, 19. — | { II. 149.
III. 621. | — 5. — | II. 294. | XXXVII. 1. — | II. 301. |
| — 19. — | III. 183. | — 12, — 16. — | II. 300. | — 5, — 11. — | II. 307. |
| — 19, 20. — | III. 618. | — 13. — | III. 637. | XXXVIII. — | II. 308. |
| — 21. — | III. 624. | — 17. — | II. 524. | XXXIX. 4. — | II. 308. |
| — 23. — | II. 660. | — 18, — 21. — | II. 297. | XLI. 24, — 32. — | II. 309. |
| IV. 1. — | III. 619. | XVI. 1, 2, 3. — | II. 299. | — 38, — 44. — | II. 308. |
| — 2. — | II. 660. | — 10. — | II. 171, 294. | — 46, — 49, 53, — 57. — | II. 310. |
| — 2, &c. 4. — | III. 624. | XVII. 1, 15, 16. — | II. 300. | XLII. 6, 9. — | II. 308. |
| — 3. — | II. 727. | — 2, 4, 5, 6. — | II. 294. | XLIII. 26, 27, 28. — | II. 309. |
| — 7. — | I. 521. | — 7. — | { I. 771.
II. 171. | XLIV. 14. — | II. 309. |
| — 10, 25. — | III. 620. | — 7, 8. — | { III. 636.
II. 297. | XLV. 6, 11. — | II. 310. |
| — 19. — | I. 478. | — 7, 9, 12. — | { III. 534.
I. 682. | XLVI. 3. — | II. 294. |
| — 20, 21, 22. — | II. 660. | — 8, 13, 15, 17, }
19, 20, 21. } | II. 171. | — 4. — | II. 300. |
| — 26. — | III. 621. | — 10, 13. — | I. 732. | XLVII. 9. — | II. 171. |
| V. 4, 29. — | III. 621. | — 13. — | III. 733. | — 13. — | II. 310. |
| — 24. — | { I. 517.
II. 171. | — 17. — | II. 299. | — 27, &c. — | II. 295. |
| VI. 2. — | I. 478. | — 19, 21. — | II. 300. | — 31. — | II. 309. |
| — 2, 4. — | III. 620. | — 20. — | II. 294. | XLVIII. 4. — | II. 295, 297. |
| — 3. — | { II. 625.
III. 622. | XVIII. 10, 14. — | II. 300. | — 5. — | III. 647. |
| — 3, 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, }
13, 17. } | II. 290. | — 11, 12. — | II. 299. | — 20. — | III. 637. |
| — 3, 5, 7. — | I. 518. | — 17, 20, 21, 23, — 33. — | II. 303. | XLIX. 1. — | II. 330. |
| | | — 18. — | { II. 175, 295.
III. 636. | — 1, 8, — 10. — | II. 311. |
| | | — 19. — | III. 528. | — 4, 8. — | III. 647. |
| | | — 23. — | II. 525. | | GENE- |
| | | — 25. — | { I. 455.
II. 525. | | |

| GENESIS. | | EXODUS. | | LEVITICUS. | |
|-------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| Chap. and Ver. | Vol. and Page. | Chap. and Ver. | Vol. and Page. | Chap. and Ver. | Vol. and Page. |
| XLIX. 8. | I. 204. | XXIV. 1, 9, 11, 14. | III. 589. | XXI. 7, 13, 14. | III. 556. |
| — 8, 10. | II. 174. | — 5, &c. | III. 741. | — 7, &c. 17, &c. | III. 779. |
| — 10. | III. 646. [175. | XXV. 10. | III. 756, 757. | XXIII. 14, 21, 31, 41. | III. 733. |
| — 18. | II. 173, 174. | — 16. | II. 534. | — 24. | III. 742. |
| — 31. | III. 552, 561, 649, 705. | — 40. | III. 774. | — 34, 39. | III. 743. |
| | I. 701. | | I. 684. | — 43, &c. | I. 682. |
| | II. 282. | XXVI. 33. | III. 585. | XXIV. 2. | III. 773. |
| | II. 309. | XXVII. 21. | III. 747. | — 3, 8, 9. | III. 733. |
| | | XXVIII. 41. | III. 733. | — 44. | II. 187. |
| EXODUS. | | XXIX. 1, 2, 3, 10--28. | III. 733. | XXV. 2, 9. | III. 743. |
| I. 7. | II. 294. | — 2, 28. | III. 780. | — 8. | III. 553. |
| — 9, 12. | II. 295. | — 4, 5, &c. 7. | III. 733. | — 8, 9, 10. | II. 174. |
| III. 2,--4. | II. 525. | XXX. 7, 8, 34. | III. 779. | — 25. | III. 629. |
| — 6, 16. | II. 171. | — 10. | III. 780. | — 30. | III. 734. |
| — 7, 10. | I. 732. | — 21. | I. 783. | — 34. | III. 733. |
| — 8. | I. 639. | — 26. | III. 733. | XXVI. 3, &c. | II. 317. |
| — 8, 17. | II. 297. | XXXI. 2,--6. | III. 711. | — 12. | I. 702. |
| — 20, 21, 22. | II. 300. | — 3. | II. 662. | — 14, &c. | II. 318. |
| IV. 5. | III. 544. | — 3, &c. | III. 585. | — 29. | II. 323. |
| — 22. | III. 645. | — 13. | I. 219. | — 33, 36, 39. | II. 186. |
| — 29. | III. 589. | | I. 682. | — 41. | III. 740. |
| V. 1, 23. | I. 732. | — 16. | II. 728. | | |
| VI. 4. | II. 301. | | I. 682. | NUMBERS. | |
| — 6, 7, 8. | III. 538. | XXXII. 9. | III. 733. | IV. 3. | I. 485. |
| — 7. | I. 732. | — 13. | II. 525. | — 3, 23, 30, 35, 39, 43. | III. 733. |
| — 7, 8. | III. 544. | — 19. | II. 294. | VII. 12. | III. 647. |
| — 16,--20. | II. 302. | XXXIII. 2, 4, 15. | III. 775. | X. 8. | III. 733. |
| VII. 3, 4, 5. | III. 539. | — 11. | II. 525. | — 10. | III. 742. |
| — 12, 22. | III. 121. | XXXIV. 10. | II. 328. | — 14. | III. 647. |
| — 13, 22. | I. 112. | — 10, 25. | II. 317. | — 33. | III. 747. |
| — 16. | I. 732. | — 15. | II. 662. | XI. 18. | II. 853. |
| — 17. | III. 539, 544. | — 23, 24. | I. 702. | XII. 6, 7, 8. | III. 655. |
| VIII. 1. | III. 117. | — 29,--35. | II. 319. | — 6, 8. | II. 328. |
| — 1, 20. | I. 732. | XXXVI. 1, &c. | I. 763. | — 8. | II. 527. |
| — 7. | III. 121. | — 1, 2. | II. 662. | XIII. 23. | II. 306. |
| — 10, 11. | I. 645. | XL. 15. | I. 219. | — 32. | I. 5. |
| — 10, 22. | III. 544. | — 34. | III. 733. | — 33. | II. 668. |
| — 22. | III. 539. | — 34, 35. | II. 524. | XIV. 15, 21. | III. 565. |
| — 32. | I. 112. | | III. 705. | — 22, &c. | II. 318. |
| IX. 1, 13. | I. 732. | LEVITICUS. | | — 34. | II. 184. |
| — 14. | III. 539. | I. 1, 9, 13, 17. | III. 776. | XV. 2. | I. 682. |
| — 14, 16, 17. | III. 544. | — 4. | I. 778. | — 15. | III. 733. |
| — 16. | III. 565. | III. 2, 8, 10. | III. 776. | — 30. | III. 757. |
| X. 2. | III. 544. | — 17. | I. 778. | — 32,--36. | III. 724. |
| — 3, &c. | I. 732. | IV. 4, 15, 24, 29, 33, &c. | III. 733, 736. | — 38. | I. 682. |
| XI. 2. | III. 539. | V. 5, &c. | I. 778. | XVI. 1. | II. 303. |
| — 2, 3, &c. | II. 302. | VI. 18, 22. | I. 779. | XVII. 12. | III. 775. |
| — 9. | II. 182. | — 25, 30. | III. 733. | XVIII. 8, 11, 19, 23. | III. 733. |
| XII. 5. | II. 396. | VII. 34, 36. | I. 779. | XIX. 10, 21. | III. 733. |
| — 14. | I. 682. | IX. 24. | III. 733. | XX. 11, 12. | II. 854. |
| — 14, 17, 24. | III. 733. | X. 5. | III. 624. | XXI. | II. 298. |
| — 21. | III. 589. | — 9, 15. | II. 270. | — 5, 6. | I. 771. |
| — 24, 26. | II. 180. | — 17. | III. 733. | — 5, 6, 9. | III. 651. |
| — 35, 36, 40, 41. | II. 302. | XI. 45. | I. 779. | — 28. | III. 659. |
| — 36. | III. 539. | XIV. 34. | I. 682. | XXIII. 10. | II. 295. |
| — 46. | I. 729. | XVI. 3,--28. | III. 743. | XXIV. 7, 14, 17,--24. | II. 324. |
| XIII. 9. | I. 682. | — 10, 11, 14, 15, 18, 19, 28, 29. | III. 780. | — 16. | I. 220. |
| — 17. | III. 540. | — 13. | I. 783. | — 17. | III. 659. |
| — 17, 18. | I. 704. | — 20. | III. 747. | — 17, 19. | II. 173. |
| — 21. | II. 524. | — 21. | I. 784. | — 24. | II. 294. |
| XV. 27. | III. 589. | — 21, 22. | III. 757, 776. | XXV. 11, 12, 13. | II. 326. |
| XVI. 33. | III. 775. | — 22. | I. 778. | — 13. | III. 733. |
| XVII. 3. | II. 182. | — 24. | II. 374. | XXVI. 5,--9. | II. 303. |
| — 15. | III. 589. | — 24, 26, 27, 28. | III. 776. | — 63, &c. | II. 319. |
| XVIII. 11. | III. 566. | — 29, 31, 34. | I. 779. | XXVII. 21. | II. 524. |
| — 24. | III. 588. | XVII. 7. | III. 733. | XXVIII. 11, 14. | III. 742. |
| XIX. 1, 3,--6. | II. 317. | — 11, 12. | III. 776. | XXIX. 1. | III. 742. |
| — 3, &c. | III. 741. | XVIII. 1, 2, 24, 27, 30. | I. 702. | XXXII. 10, 11, 12. | II. 318. |
| — 5. | III. 742, 763. | XIX. 2, 3, 10, 25, 31, 34, 36. | I. 702. | — 13. | II. 319. |
| — 6. | III. 541. | — 18. | I. 128, 142. | — 14. | II. 182. |
| — 18. | III. 771. | — 34. | III. 671. | XXXIII. 34. | II. 284. |
| XX. 9. | II. 525. | XX. 23. | I. 702. | XXXV. 25, 28. | II. 180. |
| — 18. | III. 657. | — 24, 26. | I. 682. | — 34. | I. 682. |
| — 22. | III. 755. | — 24,--26. | III. 541. | | |
| XXI. 6. | III. 733. | | | DEUTERONOMO- | |
| — 16. | I. 142. | | | MY. I. 8. | II. 171. |
| XXIII. 4. | I. 142. | | | — 10. | II. 295. |
| — 24, 32. | I. 702. | | | — 34, &c. | II. 318. |
| | | | | II. | II. 298. |

| DEUTERONOMY. | | DEUTERONOMY. | | 2 SAMUEL. | |
|-------------------|----------------|----------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Chap. and Ver. | Vol. and Page. | Chap. and Ver. | Vol. and Page. | Chap. and Ver. | Vol. and Page. |
| II. 14, 15, 16. | II. 320. | XXX. | I. 692. | VII. | I. 729. |
| III. | II. 298. | — 1, 4. | II. 187. | — | II. 277. |
| IV. 10. | II. 498. | — 1, 5. | II. 297. | — | III. 334. |
| — 11. | III. 771. | — 6. | III. 740. | — 6. | II. 174. |
| — 14. | I. 682. | — 6, 7, 8. | I. 693. | — 12. | II. 296. |
| — 25, &c. | II. 319. | — 12. | III. 732. | — 12, &c. | III. 665, 684. |
| — 27. | II. 186, 295. | — 27. | I. 771. | — 12, &c. 15. | III. 555. |
| — 30. | II. 187. | XXXI. 10. | I. 137. | — 13, 14, 16. | II. 177. |
| — 35. | III. 544. | — 26. | III. 747, 775. | — 14. | II. 336. |
| V. 13, 14, 15. | II. 726. | XXXII. 8. | II. 527. | VIII. 2. | III. 660. |
| — 26. | I. 769. | — 8, 9. | II. 316. | — 14. | II. 306. |
| — 29, &c. | II. 319. | — 15, 17. | I. 769. | — 17. | II. 333. |
| VI. 1, &c. | II. 319. | — 21. | III. 639, 645. | — 18. | III. 749. |
| — 1, 20. | III. 723. | — 28, 29. | II. 855. | XI. 11. | III. 747. |
| — 4. | I. 770. | XXXIII. | II. 329. | XV. 24, &c. | II. 333. |
| — 8, 13, 14. | III. 544. | — 15. | I. 86. | XIX. 11. | II. 333. |
| — 13. | I. 93, 127. | XXXIV. 4. | II. 297. | — 40, &c. | III. 647. |
| — 14. | I. 702. | — 9, 10. | II. 173. | XX. 25. | II. 333. |
| VII. 12, &c. | II. 319. | — 10, 11, 12. | II. 328. | — 26. | III. 749. |
| VIII. 7, 8, 9. | II. 306. | — | III. 656. | XXII. | II. 346. |
| — 9. | I. 639. | XXXVIII. 8. | III. 644. | XXIII. 1, 7. | II. 340. |
| — 15. | III. 209. | JOSHUA. | | — 2. | I. 770. |
| — 19, 20. | II. 319. | III. 3, &c. | III. 747. | XXIV. 1. | II. 178. |
| IX. 16. | III. 206. | V. 11, 12. | I. 833. | | I. 111. |
| X. 1. | III. 747. | — 14. | II. 525. | I KINGS. | |
| — 5. | III. 775. | VI. | II. 330. | I. 8. | II. 333. |
| — 6, 7. | II. 284. | — 6. | III. 747. | — 32, &c. | II. 335. |
| — 16. | I. 684. | — 26. | II. 330. | II. 3, 4. | II. 337. |
| — 22. | III. 740. | IX. 19. | I. 134. | — 26, 27. | II. 333. |
| — 22. | II. 295. | X. 12. | II. 498. | III. 14. | II. 337. |
| XI. 8, 9. | II. 319. | — 12, 13. | II. 578. | IV. 4. | II. 333. |
| — 8, 9, 21. | I. 682. | XV. 1. | III. 647. | — 29, 33. | II. 661. |
| XII. 1, &c. | I. 682. | XXI. 43, 44, 45. | II. 320. | — 31. | II. 336. |
| — 1, 19. | III. 736. | XXIII. 14. | II. 320. | V. 3. | II. 338. |
| — 11. | III. 622. | — 15, 16. | II. 317. | — 3, 4, 5. | II. 278. |
| — 17. | I. 134. | XXIV. 2. | III. 527. | VI. 12, 13. | II. 337. |
| — 30, 31. | I. 702. | — 13. | I. 769. | — 36. | III. 773. |
| — 32. | III. 732. | — 26. | I. 119. | VII. 12. | II. 662. |
| XIII. 1. | III. 122. | — 31. | II. 320. | — 14. | III. 775. |
| — 1, &c. | II. 164, 328. | JUDGES. | | VIII. 9. | III. 705. |
| — 1, 2. | III. 117. | I. | II. 320. | — 11. | III. 665. |
| — 1, 2, 3. | I. 93. | — 2. | III. 647. | — 18. | II. 339. |
| XIV. 2. | I. 682. | II. 7. | II. 320. | — 19. | II. 337. |
| — 28. | I. 137. | — 10, &c. | II. 321. | — 25. | I. 687. |
| XV. 2, 3. | I. 142. | III. 7, 8, 9. | II. 321. | — 46. | II. 317. |
| — 17. | III. 733. | — 12, &c. | III. 771. | IX. 1, 9. | II. 337. |
| XVI. 5. | I. 134. | V. 4, 5. | II. 676. | — 3, 9. | III. 566. |
| — 16. | III. 743. | XII. 6. | II. 525. | X. 24. | II. 321. |
| XVII. 12. | III. 757. | XIII. 18, 22. | III. 629. | — 15, 16. | II. 306. |
| — 15. | I. 134. | RUTH. | | XII. 16, &c. | III. 662. |
| XVIII. | II. 278. | III. 12, 13. | III. 629. | — 32. | III. 649. |
| — 10. | III. 655. | I SAMUEL. | | XIII. | III. 127. |
| — 10, 14. | III. 654. | I. 11, 22, 28. | III. 733. | XIV. 5, 12. | III. 654. |
| — 15, &c. | I. 712. | II. 9, 10. | II. 330. | XVI. 34. | II. 330. |
| — 15, 19. | II. 173, 327. | — 30. | II. 111. | XVIII. 38. | III. 624. |
| — 15, 18, 19. | III. 755. | — 31, 36. | II. 331. | XIX. 14, 18. | I. 522. |
| — 16, 17, 18, 19. | III. 657. | — 32. | II. 332. | XXII. 47. | II. 307. |
| — 18, 19. | III. 548. | — 35. | II. 326. | 2 KINGS. | |
| — 20, 22. | III. 658. | III. 3, 4. | III. 773. | I. 4, 16. | III. 654. |
| — 21, 22. | II. 328. | — 11, 14. | II. 331. | II. 11. | II. 171. |
| — 22. | III. 123. | IV. 3, 5. | III. 747. | V. 6. | I. 34. |
| XXI. 23. | II. 180. | — 3, 22. | III. 748. | — 11, &c. | II. 854. |
| XXII. 3. | I. 134. | — 10, 11, 17, 18. | II. 332. | VI. 26, 30. | II. 323. |
| XXIII. 19, 20. | I. 142. | VI. 8. | III. 775. | VII. 2. | II. 854. |
| XXIV. 7, 14. | I. 143. | VIII. | II. 321. | VIII. 10. | III. 654. |
| XXV. 5. | I. 587. | IX. 20. | III. 654, 705. | — 20, 22. | II. 307. |
| XXVI. 18, 19. | II. 319. | XII. 12, 13, 17, 19. | II. 321. | — 21. | II. 306. |
| XXVII. 26. | III. 727, 745. | XIV. 18. | III. 747. | XIV. 7. | II. 288. |
| XXVIII. | I. 692, 714. | — 32. | III. 206. | XV. 29. | II. 323. |
| — 25, 37, 64, 65. | II. 186. | — 44. | II. 533. | XVII. 5. | II. 321. |
| — 53, 57. | II. 323. | XV. 4. | III. 647. | — 6, 23. | I. 137. |
| — 62, 63. | II. 295. | — 22. | III. 741. | XVIII. 10. | II. 323. |
| XXVIII. XXXII. | II. 319. | XVI. 7. | III. 784. | — 10, 11, 12. | II. 321. |
| XXIX. | I. 692. | — 13, 14. | III. 662. | — 23. | III. 546. |
| — 16, 17. | I. 702. | XVII. 33. | I. 134. | — 26. | III. 621. |
| — 23. | II. 304. | XVIII. 4. | II. 669. | XXIII. | I. 711. |
| — 29. | I. 157. | XXII. 18, 19. | II. 331. | — 10. | III. 274. |
| | III. 683, 733. | XXX. 7, 8. | III. 747. | | |

1 CHRONICLES.

| Chap. and Ver. | Vol. and Page. |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| II. 3,4,5,21,22,23. | II. 302. |
| III. 17. | III. 629. |
| V. 1, 2. | { II. 174.
III. 646. |
| — 2. | III. 709. |
| — 26. | II. 288. |
| XII. 33. | III. 784. |
| XIV. 17. | III. 566. |
| XVII. | II. 277, 334. |
| — 9, 14. | III. 666. |
| — 11. | II. 296. |
| XVIII. 11, 12, 13. | II. 306. |
| XXII. 6, &c. | II. 278. |
| — 6, 7, 8. | II. 338. |
| — 7, 8. | II. 337. |
| — 9. | II. 339. |
| — 10, ---13. | II. 337. |
| XXIII. 1. | II. 335. |
| XXIV. 5. | I. 145. |
| XXVIII. 2, 3. | II. 337, 338. |
| — 2, &c. | II. 278. |
| — 6, ---9. | II. 337. |
| XXXIX. 22, &c. | II. 335. |

2 CHRONICLES.

| | |
|----------------|-------------|
| II. 7. | III. 566. |
| — 14. | II. 662. |
| IV. 9. | III. 773. |
| V. 14. | III. 705. |
| VI. 9. | II. 339. |
| — 16. | II. 337. |
| — 41. | III. 748. |
| VII. 1. | III. 624. |
| — 1, 2. | III. 705. |
| — 17, ---22. | II. 337. |
| IX. 26. | III. 566. |
| XI. 13, &c. | III. 662. |
| — 16, &c. | { III. 649. |
| XV. 9. | II. 183. |
| XVII. 7, 8, 9. | III. 705. |
| XXI. 20. | II. 327. |
| XXIV. | III. 750. |
| XXVI. 18. | { III. 712. |
| XXX. 5. | III. 705. |
| XXXI. 5. | III. 773. |
| XXXII. 27. | III. 693. |
| XXXIII. 5. | II. 182. |
| — 11. | III. 748. |
| XXXIV. 14. | III. 693. |
| XXXV. 3. | III. 705. |
| — 21. | III. 693. |
| XXXVI. 10. | III. 649. |
| — 13. | |
| — 21. | |

EZRA.

| | |
|---------------|----------|
| VII. 6, 7, 8. | II. 184. |
|---------------|----------|

NEHEMIAH.

| | |
|--------------|-----------|
| I. | I. 692. |
| V. 14. | II. 185. |
| IX. 13. | III. 740. |
| XII. 10, 11. | II. 327. |

ESTHER.

| | |
|--------|-----------|
| I. 19. | III. 712. |
|--------|-----------|

JOB.

| | |
|---------------|-----------|
| I. | III. 267. |
| — 1. | I. 522. |
| II. | III. 267. |
| VII. 21. | II. 270. |
| IX. 3, 20. | I. 687. |
| — 32, 33. | I. 453. |
| XI. 7, 8, 9. | I. 516. |
| — 8, 9. | III. 765. |
| XIII. 15. | I. 701. |
| XV. 15. | III. 224. |
| XIX. 25. | II. 171. |
| — 25, 26, 27. | I. 701. |

Vol. III.

JOB.

| Chap. and Ver. | Vol. and Page. |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| XIX. 26, 27. | II. 324. |
| XXV. 5, 6. | I. 687. |
| XXVI. 7. | I. 33. |
| XXXI. 18. | II. 843. |
| XXXII. 8. | { I. 433.
II. 661. |
| XXXV. 10. | I. 769. |
| — 10, 11. | II. 686. |
| XXXVI. 24, 25. | II. 722. |
| XXXVIII. 10, }
11, &c. -- } | III. 187. |
| — 36. | I. 219. |
| — 41. | II. 630. |
| XXXIX. 14, ---17. | II. 695. |
| — 27, 28. | II. 647. |
| — 27, 28, 29. | II. 638. |
| XL. 4. | III. 182. |

PSALMS.

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| I. 2. | III. 652. |
| II. | { I. 712, 729.
II. 278, 282. |
| — 2, 6, 7, 9, ---12. | II. 275. |
| — 7. | I. 771. |
| — 8. | III. 670. |
| — 9. | { II. 325.
III. 681. |
| III. | II. 277. |
| V. 4, 5. | I. 454. |
| VII. | II. 277. |
| VIII. | II. 271, 277, 278. |
| — 2. | II. 278. |
| — 3. | I. 74. |
| — 5. | III. 264. |
| — 5, 6. | III. 235. |
| IX. | II. 277. |
| X. 4. | I. 363. |
| XII. 2. | III. 784. |
| XIV. | { I. 687.
II. 277. |
| — 1. | { I. 357.
II. 203, 657. |
| — 2, 4. | I. 4. |
| — 4. | II. 856. |
| — 5. | I. 7. |
| — 6, 7. | I. 762. |
| XV. | II. 277. [282. |
| XVI. | { II. 271, 278,
III. 563. |
| — 10. | { II. 177.
III. 663. |
| — 10, 11. | III. 557. |
| XVII. 15. | I. 701. |
| XVIII. | II. 277, 346. |
| — 4, 5, &c. | III. 515. |
| XIX. 1. | { I. 52.
II. 498, 561. |
| — 1, 2. | II. 209. |
| — 1, 2, 3, 4. | { I. 432.
III. 179. |
| XXII. | { I. 713, 725, 729
II. 277.
III. 579. |
| — 1. | I. 501. |
| — 9, 10. | II. 289, 844. |
| — 16. | II. 183, 278, 282. |
| XXIV. | II. 277. |
| — 9. | I. 4. |
| XXV. 9. | III. 718. |
| — 9, 14. | III. 636. |
| — 14. | I. 706. |
| XXIX. | II. 277. |
| — 3, 4. | III. 192. |
| XXX. | II. 277. |
| XXXI. 5. | I. 771. |
| XXXII. 9. | { II. 855.
III. 228. |
| — 12. | I. 687. |
| XXXIV. | II. 277. |
| XXXV. 14. | II. 289. |

PSALMS.

| Pfal. and Ver. | Vol. and Page. |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|
| XL. | I. 711. |
| — 7. | I. 769. |
| XLI. 9. | II. 280, 290. |
| XLV. | II. 277, 282. |
| — 6, 7. | I. 771. |
| — 7. | III. 779. |
| — 13. | III. 772. |
| XLVII. | { II. 277: |
| XLVIII. | III. 776. |
| XLIX. 7, 8. | II. 686. |
| — 12. | II. 277, 282. |
| L. | III. 741. |
| — 14. | I. 455. |
| — 21. | I. 676. |
| — 23. | II. 277. |
| LI. | II. 182. |
| — 4. | II. 843. |
| — 5. | III. 757. |
| — 16. | I. 676. |
| — 16, 17. | III. 741. |
| — 17. | { II. 277. |
| LII. | I. 357. |
| LIII. | { II. 277. |
| — 1. | I. 701. |
| LIV. | { II. 277. |
| LV. | I. 701. |
| — 23. | { II. 277. |
| LVI. | III. 226. |
| LVII. | II. 843. |
| LVIII. 3. | I. 769. |
| — 4. | { II. 277. |
| — 12. | II. 174. |
| LIX. | II. 277. |
| LX. | II. 277. |
| — 7. | II. 277. |
| LXII.LXIII.LXIV. | III. 773. |
| LXV. 4. | I. 524. |
| — 11. | III. 670. |
| LXVII. 2. | I. 770. |
| — 6, 7. | II. 277. |
| LXVIII. | II. 525. |
| — 17, 18. | { I. 729.
II. 278, 282. |
| LXIX. | II. 290. |
| — 8. | I. 789. |
| — 21. | III. 741. |
| — 31. | I. 676. |
| — 31, 32. | II. 290. |
| LXXI. 6. | I. 711, 712, 729. |
| LXXII. | II. 683. |
| — 3. | III. 685. |
| — 5, 7, 17. | III. 557, 705. |
| — 8. | III. 670. |
| — 8, 9, 10, 11. | III. 515, 618. |
| — 9. | { II. 274.
III. 557. |
| — 17. | I. 701. |
| LXXIII. 2, 3, 17, 18. | III. 269. |
| — 3. | II. 723. |
| — 11. | II. 277. |
| LXXIV. | II. 317. |
| LXXVI. 1. | II. 277. |
| LXXVII. | II. 278. |
| LXXVIII. | II. 182, 279, 290. |
| — 2. | III. 158. |
| — 16. | { I. 712.
II. 277, 282. |
| LXXIX. | III. 742. |
| LXXXI. 3, 4. | { I. 711.
II. 277. |
| LXXXIII. | III. 773. |
| LXXXIV. 2. | II. 277. |
| LXXXV. | II. 535. |
| — 10. | III. 671. |
| LXXXVI. 9. | II. 290. |
| — 16. | II. 277. |
| LXXXVII. | { I. 729.
II. 277, 334. |
| LXXXIX. | II. 336. |
| — 1, ---4. | |

(9 P)

PSALMS.

| PSALMS. | | PSALMS. | | ISAIAH. | |
|------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|----------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Pfal. and Ver. | Vol. and Page. | Pfal. and Ver. | Vol. and Page. | Chap. and Ver. | Vol. and Page. |
| LXXXIX. 3, 4, 29, 36 | II. 296. | CXLVII. 8. — | I. 52. | VII. — | I. 711, 729. |
| — 3, 28, 29. — | III. 684. | — 9. — | II. 630. | — 3. — | II. 288. |
| — 4, 29, 36. — | II. 274. | CXVIII. 5. — | I. 52. | — 8, 9. — | II. 279. |
| — 9. — | II. 573. | CXLIX. 2. — | I. 769. | — 10, ---18. — | III. 648. |
| — 19, &c. — | II. 336. | | | — 13, 14. — | I. 711. |
| — 30, ---39, 49, ---51 | III. 685. | PROVERBS. | | — 14. — | II. 289. [526.] |
| — 51. — | III. 709. | Chap. and Ver. | | — 14, 17, ---20. — | II. 177, 279, 290. |
| — 60, 61. — | II. 333. | II. 6. — | II. 649, 661. | VIII. — | III. 648. |
| XC. 7, ---10. — | II. 320. | III. 5. — | II. 538. | — 4, 7, 8. — | I. 711. |
| — 10. — | I. 625. | — 17. — | I. 6, 505. | — 8, 18. — | III. 648. |
| XCI. — | III. 200. | — 19. — | I. 87. | — 14. — | II. 289. |
| XCIII. — | II. 277. | VI. 6, 7, 8. — | II. 702. | — 14, 15. — | I. 771. |
| — 4. — | III. 687. | VIII. 17. — | II. 544. | — 20. — | III. 682. |
| XCIV. 9. — | I. 45. | — 31. — | II. 524. | IX. — | II. 273. |
| — 10. — | III. 99. | — 34. — | II. [562]. | — 6. — | II. 278. |
| XCV. 10, 11. — | II. 318. | XII. 10. — | III. 205. | — 6, 7. — | I. 111, 139. |
| XCVI. 3, 10. — | III. 566. | XIV. 32. — | II. 788. | — 7. — | II. 526. |
| — 8. — | III. 773. | XVI. 4. — | III. 166, 271. | X. 20, &c. — | III. 678, 680. |
| XCIX. — | II. 277. | XVII. 14. — | I. 801. | — 21, 22. — | I. 712. |
| CII. — | I. 762, 771. | XX. 27. — | II. 504. | — 22. — | II. 173. [551.] |
| — 25. — | II. 346. | XXI. 24. — | I. 804. | | II. 177, 339. |
| CIV. — | I. 84. | XXII. 28. — | III. 734. | | III. 685. |
| — 8. — | II. 573. | XXIII. 23. — | II. 734. | | III. 672. |
| — 8, 9. — | III. 193. | XXV. 27. — | II. 852. | | II. 187. |
| — 14. — | III. 182. | XXVI. 4. — | I. 5. | | II. 170. |
| — 19. — | III. 186. | XXX. 9. — | II. 546. | | III. 682. |
| — 24. — | II. 630. | — 17. — | II. 313. | | I. 712. [562.] |
| — 26. — | II. 628. | — 24. — | II. 702. | | III. 557, 561. |
| — 27, 28. — | II. 617. | — 24, 28. — | II. 649. | | I. 139. |
| — 29. — | III. 644. | — 26. — | II. 647. | | II. 174. |
| CV. 9, 10. — | II. 308. | ECCLESIASTES | | | III. 554. |
| — 18, ---22. — | III. 705. | I. 2. — | I. 672. | | III. 555. |
| CVI. 24. — | II. 326. | — 4. — | II. 625. | | II. 173. |
| — 30, 31. — | I. 711. | III. 11. — | II. 645. | | II. 175. |
| CVIII. — | II. 174. | — 21. — | II. 244. | | II. 339. |
| CIX. — | II. 277, 282. | VII. 20. — | I. 687. | | III. 664. |
| | I. 725. | — 29. — | III. 237, 257. | | II. 178. |
| CX. — | II. 271, 278. | VIII. 1. — | II. 441. | | III. 681, 687. |
| — 1. — | III. 556, 563. | — 11. — | I. 455. | | III. 678. |
| — 2. — | I. 769. | IX. 1, 2. — | II. 316. | | II. 170. |
| — 4. — | III. 686. | — 2. — | III. 159, 269. | | III. 677, 683. |
| — 5, 6. — | III. 687. | — 10. — | II. 665. | | III. 671. |
| — 6. — | I. 689, 712. | XI. 6. — | II. [562]. | | I. 690. |
| — 12. — | III. 681. | XII. 1. — | III. 269. | | III. 555, 705. |
| — 12. — | III. 670. | — 6. — | II. 501. | | III. 652. |
| CXI. 2. — | III. 557. | — 11. — | II. 659. | | III. 673. |
| CXII. 9. — | II. 561, 721. | — 13, 14. — | III. 37. | | II. 187. |
| CXVI. 11. — | I. 701. | ISAIAH. | | | III. 678. |
| — 16. — | II. 179. | I. 3. — | II. 855. | | II. 183. |
| CXVII. 10. — | II. 290. | — 4. — | III. 614. | | II. 184. |
| CXVIII. — | I. 701. | — 10. — | I. 711. | | II. 184. |
| — 18, 33. — | II. 277, 278, 282. | — 11, ---17. — | III. 741. | | III. 673. |
| — 97, 99. — | I. 706. | — 26. — | II. 770. | | I. 711. |
| — 100, 130. — | II. 652, 783. | II. 2. — | I. 235, 690. | | III. 750. |
| — 105. — | II. 504. | — 2, 3. — | II. 170, 268. | | I. 690. |
| CXXX. 3, 4. — | III. 652. | — 2, 3, 4. — | III. 650, 705. | | II. 183. |
| CXXXI. 2. — | II. 511. | — 2, &c. — | III. 678. | | I. 695. |
| CXXXII. — | III. 784. | — 3. — | II. 275. | | II. 530. |
| — 11. — | I. 687. | — 12, 13, 14, 15. — | III. 672. | | II. 171. |
| — 12. — | II. 290. | III. — | I. 712. | | II. 283. |
| CXXXIII. 2. — | I. 712, 729. | IV. — | III. 87. | | II. 187. |
| CXXXV. 6, 7. — | II. 277, 278. | — 1, 3, 5, 6. — | II. 268. | | II. 278. |
| CXXXVII. — | II. 339. | — 3. — | III. 285. | | I. 771. |
| — 14. — | III. 563. | V. — | III. 561. | | I. 219. |
| — 16. — | II. 337. | — 1, 2, 20. — | II. 170, 171. | | II. 498. |
| CXLI. — | III. 779. | — 3, 4. — | II. 285. | | II. 278. |
| CXLIII. — | III. 192. | VI. — | III. 276. | | III. 680. |
| CXLV. 13. — | I. 711. | — 3. — | II. 274. | | III. 678. |
| — 15, 16. — | II. 277. | — 8. — | I. 771. | | I. 714, 729. |
| CXLVII. 5. — | II. 290. | — 8, 9. — | II. 278. | | I. 711. |
| | II. 210, 501. | — 9. — | I. 770. | | I. 732. |
| | III. 200. | — 13. — | III. 240. | | III. 555. |
| | I. 21. | | I. 769. | | I. 96. |
| | II. 277. | | I. 763. | | I. 712. |
| | I. 687. | | II. 181, 543. | | II. 278. |
| | II. 551. | | II. 187. | | ISAIAH. |
| | II. 628. | | | | |
| | I. 516. | | | | |

| ISAIAS. | Chap. and Ver. | Vol. and Page. |
|---------|----------------|-----------------|
| XL. | 2. | II. 535. |
| | 3, 4, 5. | III. 716. |
| | 4. | III. 718. |
| | 12. | III. 166. |
| XLII. | 1. | I. 149. |
| | 1, 2, 3. | III. 555. |
| | 1, 2, 3, 6. | II. 175. |
| | 1, 3, 4. | II. 173. |
| | 1, 4, 6, 7. | III. 671. |
| | 1, 7. | III. 554. [755. |
| | 4. | III. 650, 656. |
| | 4, &c. | III. 554. |
| | 21. | II. 535. |
| XLIII. | | I. 711. |
| | 5, 6. | II. 187. |
| XLIV. | | I. 711. |
| | 3. | I. 508. |
| | 18, 19. | II. 855. |
| | 28. | III. 649. |
| XLV. | 1. | III. 160. |
| | 5, 6. | III. 567. |
| | 7. | III. 166. |
| XLVI. | 8. | II. 855. |
| XLVIII. | 8. | II. 843. |
| | 16. | I. 770. |
| | 18, 19. | II. 295. |
| | 22. | III. 681. [712. |
| XLIX. | | I. 690, 711. |
| | 1. | II. 290. |
| | 3. | I. 150. |
| | 6. | II. 175. |
| | 6, 22, 23. | III. 705. |
| | 8. | III. 671. |
| | 20, &c. | III. 680. |
| | 22. | II. 187. |
| | 23. | III. 515. |
| L. | | I. 690. |
| | 5. | III. 650. |
| | 5, 6. | I. 498. |
| LI. | 4, 5. | III. 656. |
| LII. | | III. 692. |
| | 7. | III. 680. |
| | 10. | III. 557. |
| | 13. | II. 176. |
| | 13, 14, 15. | III. 694, 697. |
| | 14, 15. | II. 275. |
| | | III. 697. |
| | | I. 713. |
| | | II. 178, 269. |
| | | 275, 278, 281. |
| LIII. | | III. 556, 557. |
| | | 692. |
| | 1, 2, 3. | II. 275. |
| | 2, 3. | III. 772. |
| | 3. | III. 685. |
| | 4. | II. 181, 270. |
| | 4, 5, 6. | II. 534. |
| | 4, 7, 10, 12. | III. 696. |
| | 4, &c. | II. 176. |
| | 5. | I. 781. |
| | 5, 12. | I. 688. |
| | 6. | I. 780. |
| | 7. | III. 695. |
| | 8, 10. | III. 557. |
| | 10. | III. 751. |
| | 10, 11. | III. 697, 710. |
| | 11, 12. | III. 698. |
| | 12. | III. 780. |
| LIV. | 5. | I. 769. |
| | | I. 430. |
| | 13. | II. 510, 545. |
| | | III. 678. |
| LV. | | II. 278. |
| | 3. | II. 339, 551. |
| | | III. 555. |

| ISAIAS. | Chap. and Ver. | Vol. and Page. |
|-----------|----------------|----------------|
| LV. | 3, &c. | III. 671. |
| | 4. | III. 646, 709. |
| | 7, 9. | III. 234. |
| | 8, 9. | II. 308. |
| | 9. | III. 233. |
| | 12. | III. 678. |
| LVI. | | II. 278. |
| | 6, 7, 8. | II. 175. |
| | 7. | I. 139. |
| LVII. | 1, 2. | II. 172. |
| | 21. | III. 681. |
| LX. | | I. 712. |
| | | II. 170. |
| | 2, 3, 4, 5. | III. 672. |
| | 5. | III. 650. |
| | 6, 7, 11, 12. | III. 672. |
| | 8, 9, 10. | II. 187. |
| | 17. | III. 678. |
| | 21. | II. 170. |
| LXI. | | I. 732. |
| | | II. 278. |
| | 1. | I. 770. |
| | | III. 710. |
| | 1, 2. | III. 657. |
| | 1, 2, &c. | III. 554. |
| | 2. | III. 680. |
| | 8, 9. | III. 555. |
| LXIV. | 6. | II. 270. |
| | 7, &c. | II. 187. |
| LXV. | | II. 228.] |
| | 15. | III. 678. |
| | 17. | II. 172. |
| | | III. 735. |
| | 17, 25. | II. 170. |
| | 23, 25. | III. 618. |
| | 25. | III. 515. |
| LXVI. | 12. | III. 678. |
| | 14. | II. 171. |
| | 20. | II. 187. |
| | 21. | III. 750. |
| | 22. | III. 706. |
| | 22, 23, 24. | II. 172. |
| JEREMIAH. | | |
| I. | 7. | II. 177. |
| II. | 20. | III. 733. |
| III. | 16. | III. 747. |
| | 19. | III. 705. |
| IV. | 4. | I. 684. |
| | | III. 740. |
| | 22. | II. 855. |
| VI. | | I. 714. |
| | 5. | II. 177. |
| | | I. 684. |
| | 10. | III. 740. |
| VII. | 4. | III. 648. |
| | 18. | II. 182. |
| | 22, 23. | I. 676. |
| | | III. 741. |
| VIII. | 7. | II. 692, 855. |
| IX. | 16. | II. 186. |
| | 25, 26. | I. 684. |
| | 26. | III. 740. |
| X. | 10, &c. | I. 769. |
| | 11. | III. 673. |
| XII. | 1. | III. 158. |
| XV. | 4. | II. 186. |
| XVI. | 15. | II. 187. |
| XVII. | 12. | III. 774. |
| XVIII. | 7, 8. | I. 96. |
| | 7, 10. | II. 329. |
| XXII. | 6. | III. 683. |
| | 7, 8. | III. 752. |
| XXIII. | 3, 7, 8. | II. 187. |
| | | I. 234. |
| | 5. | II. 174, 339. |
| | | III. 555, 685. |
| | 5, 6. | II. 173. |
| | 6. | II. 526. |
| XXIV. | 9. | II. 186. |

| JEREMIAH. | Chap. and Ver. | Vol. and Page. |
|---------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| XXV. | 34. | III. 705. |
| XXVII. | 15. | II. 182. |
| XXIX. | 10, 11. | III. 649. |
| | 18. | II. 186. |
| XXX. | | I. 712. |
| | 3. | II. 298. |
| | 9. | I. 711. |
| | | III. 555, 664. |
| | | II. 187. |
| | | III. 649. |
| XXXI. | 8. | III. 752. |
| | 8, 12. | II. 187. |
| | 15. | II. 181, 280. |
| | 16, 17, 18. | I. 150. |
| | 22. | II. 289. |
| | 31. | III. 561, 656. |
| | 31, 34. | I. 688. |
| | 31, 34. | III. 756. |
| | 31, 36. | III. 554. |
| | 31, &c. | I. 690. |
| | 33. | I. 763. |
| XXXII. | | I. 692. |
| | 9, 15. | III. 649. |
| | 30. | III. 629. |
| | 37, &c. | II. 187. |
| XXXIII. | 2. | I. 770. |
| | 14, 15. | III. 555. |
| | 15, 16. | II. 173. |
| | 15, 17, 20, 21, 25, 26. | II. 339. |
| | 22. | II. 294. |
| XXXIV. | 14. | I. 137. |
| | 17. | II. 186. |
| XXXVI. | | I. 711. |
| XXXVII. | 19. | III. 648. |
| XXXVIII. | 4. | III. 673. |
| XLIII. | 12, 13. | I. 138. |
| XLIV. | 22. | III. 649. |
| | 28. | III. 659. |
| XLVIII. | 45. | II. 304. |
| XLIX. | 17, 18. | II. 183. |
| L. | 38. | II. 184. |
| | 39. | II. 184. |
| | 40. | II. 304. |
| LI. | 26, 37, 64. | II. 184. |
| | 36, 39, 57. | II. 183. |
| LAMENTATIONS. | | |
| II. | 20. | II. 324. |
| IV. | 3. | II. 694. |
| | 10. | II. 324. |
| EZEKIEL. | | |
| I. | 1. | II. 186, 283. |
| III. | 11. | II. 186. |
| IV. | 6. | II. 184. |
| | 13. | II. 186. |
| V. | 10, 12. | II. 187. |
| VI. | 8, 9. | II. 728. |
| IX. | 4. | II. 187. |
| XI. | 15, 16, 17. | III. 557. |
| | 19, 20. | II. 186. |
| | 24. | II. 187. |
| XII. | 14, 16. | II. 295. |
| XVI. | 7. | III. 693. |
| XVII. | 13, 19. | III. 260. |
| XVIII. | 20. | I. 682. |
| XX. | 12, 20, &c. | II. 728. |
| | 20. | II. 186. |
| | 23. | I. 676. |
| | 25. | III. 379, 740. |
| | 41. | II. 187. |
| XXII. | | I. 714. |
| | 15. | II. 186. |
| XXIV. | 13. | I. 430. |
| XXVI. | 14, 21. | I. 184. |
| XXVII. | 36. | I. 184. |
| XXVIII. | 3, 19. | I. 184. |

| EZEKIEL. | | DANIEL. | | MICAH. | |
|------------------------------------|----------------|---|-----------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Chap. and Ver. | Vol. and Page. | Chap. and Ver. | Vol. and Page. | Chap. and Ver. | Vol. and Page. |
| XXVIII. 25. — | II. 187. | IX. 2, 17, 18, 19, }
20, 21, 24, &c. } | III. 708. | II. 13. — | III. 715. |
| XXIX. 14, 15. — | II. 184. | — 19, &c. — | I. 770. | IV. — | I. 690. |
| XXX. 13. — | III. 673. | — 24. — | I. 204, 688,
690. | — 1. — | I. 235. |
| XXXIII. — | I. 714. | — 24, 25. — | II. 176, 177,
184. | — 1, 2, 3. — | III. 555. |
| — 11. — | I. 521. | — 24, 26. — | III. 557. | — 1, &c. — | III. 672. |
| XXXIV. — | I. 712. | — 24, &c. — | II. 174. | — 2. — | I. 712. |
| — 12, 13. — | II. 187. | — 25. — | III. 556. | — 2, 3, 4. — | III. 87, 705. |
| — 23, 24. — | I. 711. | — 25, 26. — | III. 553, 680, 700. | V. — | III. 678. |
| — 23, 25. — | III. 555, 664. | — 25, 27. — | II. 269. | — 2. — | II. 278. |
| XXXVI. — | II. 173. | — 26. — | III. 709. | — 3. — | I. 234 [526. |
| — 23, &c. — | I. 714. | — 27. — | I. 175. | — 5, 6. — | II. 175, 176, |
| — 24. — | III. 567. | X. 2. — | III. 646. | VI. 7, 8. — | III. 557. |
| — 26, 27. — | II. 187. | — 2, 3, 4. — | II. 185. | — 3. — | II. 289. |
| XXXVII. — | I. 508. | — 13, &c. — | I. 178. | — 5, 6. — | III. 681. |
| — 7, 8, 10, 12. — | I. 712. | — 14. — | III. 562. | VII. 4, &c. — | I. 676. |
| — 21. — | II. 176. | — 25, 26. — | I. 99. | — 15. — | III. 682. |
| — 22. — | III. 673. | — 27. — | III. 751. | — 17. — | III. 752. |
| — 22, &c. — | II. 173. | XI. 2, &c. — | III. 711. | | III. 515, 618. |
| — 23, &c. — | II. 175. | — 2, 17, 18, 19, }
21, 24, &c. } | III. 736. | NAHUM. | |
| — 24, 25. — | I. 711. | — 31. — | II. 316. | II. 10. — | III. 705. |
| — 25. — | II. 178, 268. | — 33, 35. — | II. 185. | HABAKKUK. | |
| XXXVIII. 8. — | III. 664. | — 36, &c. — | III. 707. | I. 13. — | I. 454. |
| — 8, 16, 17. — | II. 177, 298. | XII. 1. — | III. 708. | III. 11. — | II. 107. |
| XXXIX. &c. — | II. 187. | — 1, 2, 3, 13. — | III. 710. | ZEPHANIAH. | |
| — 8. — | II. 282. | — 1, 4, 7, 9, 18. — | II. 185. | II. 9. — | II. 304. |
| — 27, 28, 29. — | I. 714. | — 4, 8, 9. — | II. 188. | — 11. — | III. 555, 673. |
| XL. — XLVIII. — | II. 187. | — 13. — | II. 184. | III. 9, 10. — | III. 555. |
| XLIII. 5. — | II. 337. | — 40, &c. — | II. 170, 316. | HAGGAI. | |
| — 7. — | III. 705. | — 40, &c. — | II. 172. | II. 3, &c. — | III. 701. |
| — 19. — | III. 774. | — 40, &c. — | II. 185. | — 6. — | I. 690. |
| XLIV. 4. — | II. 327. | — 40, &c. — | II. 286. | — 6, 7. — | I. 174. |
| — 7, 9. — | III. 705. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | — 6, &c. — | III. 576, 735. |
| — 15. — | III. 740. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | — 7. — | III. 700. |
| — 15, 16. — | II. 327. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | — 7, 8, 9, 22. — | I. 518. |
| XLV. 15, 17. — | II. 172. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | — 9. — | III. 705. |
| XLVII. 9, 12. — | III. 776. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | III. 552. |
| — 22. — | II. 172. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | III. 678, 704. |
| XLVIII. 11. — | II. 175. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| | II. 172. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| DANIEL. | | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| I. 17. — | II. 662. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| II. 20, 21. — | III. 707. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 31, &c. — | III. 674. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 34, 35, 44, 45. — | II. 184. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 38, &c. — | II. 170. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 44. — | III. 555. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 44, 45. — | III. 567. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| III. 29. — | I. 1. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| V. 5. — | II. 533. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| VI. 16. — | III. 567. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 26, 27. — | I. 714. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| VII. — | III. 707. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 3, &c. — | II. 267. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 3, &c. — | II. 188. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 7, 8, 19, 20, }
21, 23, &c. — | II. 172. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 9, 10. — | II. 176. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 9, 10, 11, 14. — | I. 714. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 9, &c. — | III. 273. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 10. — | II. 174. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 13, 14. — | III. 674. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 14. — | III. 685, 705. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 14, 27. — | III. 557. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 15, 16, 28. — | II. 286. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 18. — | II. 170, 171. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 22. — | III. 574, 707. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 24, 25. — | II. 170. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 27. — | II. 185. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| VIII. 3, &c. — | III. 707. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 13, 14, 26, 27. — | II. 286. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 17, 19, 26. — | II. 185. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| IX. — | I. 714, 729. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 2, &c. — | II. 275, 278. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| | III. 707. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| DANIEL. | | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| I. 17. — | II. 662. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| II. 20, 21. — | III. 707. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 31, &c. — | III. 674. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 34, 35, 44, 45. — | II. 184. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 38, &c. — | II. 170. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 44. — | III. 555. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 44, 45. — | III. 567. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| III. 29. — | I. 1. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| V. 5. — | II. 533. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| VI. 16. — | III. 567. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 26, 27. — | I. 714. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| VII. — | III. 707. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 3, &c. — | II. 267. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 3, &c. — | II. 188. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 7, 8, 19, 20, }
21, 23, &c. — | II. 172. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 9, 10. — | II. 176. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 9, 10, 11, 14. — | I. 714. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 9, &c. — | III. 273. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 10. — | II. 174. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 13, 14. — | III. 674. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 14. — | III. 685, 705. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 14, 27. — | III. 557. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 15, 16, 28. — | II. 286. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 18. — | II. 170, 171. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 22. — | III. 574, 707. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 24, 25. — | II. 170. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 27. — | II. 185. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| VIII. 3, &c. — | III. 707. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 13, 14, 26, 27. — | II. 286. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 17, 19, 26. — | II. 185. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| IX. — | I. 714, 729. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 2, &c. — | II. 275, 278. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| | III. 707. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| DANIEL. | | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| I. 17. — | II. 662. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| II. 20, 21. — | III. 707. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 31, &c. — | III. 674. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 34, 35, 44, 45. — | II. 184. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 38, &c. — | II. 170. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 44. — | III. 555. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 44, 45. — | III. 567. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| III. 29. — | I. 1. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| V. 5. — | II. 533. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| VI. 16. — | III. 567. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 26, 27. — | I. 714. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| VII. — | III. 707. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 3, &c. — | II. 267. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 3, &c. — | II. 188. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 7, 8, 19, 20, }
21, 23, &c. — | II. 172. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 9, 10. — | II. 176. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 9, 10, 11, 14. — | I. 714. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 9, &c. — | III. 273. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 10. — | II. 174. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 13, 14. — | III. 674. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 14. — | III. 685, 705. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 14, 27. — | III. 557. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 15, 16, 28. — | II. 286. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 18. — | II. 170, 171. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 22. — | III. 574, 707. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 24, 25. — | II. 170. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 27. — | II. 185. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| VIII. 3, &c. — | III. 707. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 13, 14, 26, 27. — | II. 286. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 17, 19, 26. — | II. 185. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| IX. — | I. 714, 729. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 2, &c. — | II. 275, 278. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| | III. 707. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| DANIEL. | | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| I. 17. — | II. 662. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| II. 20, 21. — | III. 707. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 31, &c. — | III. 674. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 34, 35, 44, 45. — | II. 184. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 38, &c. — | II. 170. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 44. — | III. 555. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 44, 45. — | III. 567. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| III. 29. — | I. 1. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| V. 5. — | II. 533. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| VI. 16. — | III. 567. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 26, 27. — | I. 714. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| VII. — | III. 707. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 3, &c. — | II. 267. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 3, &c. — | II. 188. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 7, 8, 19, 20, }
21, 23, &c. — | II. 172. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 9, 10. — | II. 176. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 9, 10, 11, 14. — | I. 714. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 9, &c. — | III. 273. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 10. — | II. 174. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 13, 14. — | III. 674. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 14. — | III. 685, 705. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 14, 27. — | III. 557. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 15, 16, 28. — | II. 286. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 18. — | II. 170, 171. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 22. — | III. 574, 707. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 24, 25. — | II. 170. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 27. — | II. 185. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| VIII. 3, &c. — | III. 707. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 13, 14, 26, 27. — | II. 286. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 17, 19, 26. — | II. 185. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| IX. — | I. 714, 729. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| — 2, &c. — | II. 275, 278. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| | III. 707. | — 40, &c. — | II. 171. | | |
| DAN | | | | | |

| MALACHI.
Chap. and Ver. | Vol. and Page. |
|----------------------------|----------------|
| III. 2, 3. | III. 682. |
| IV. | I. 729. |
| — 1, 5. | II. 278. |
| — 4. | III. 721. |
| — 5. | III. 732. |
| — 5, 6. | I. 235, 711. |
| — 6. | III. 576. |
| | III. 717. |
| | III. 682, 719. |

Apocrypha.

| 2 ESDRAS. | |
|-------------|-----------|
| III. 21. | III. 257. |
| TOBIT. | |
| XIV. 5. | II. 187. |
| — 15. | II. 329. |
| JUDITH. | |
| V. 17, &c. | II. 322. |
| WISDOM. | |
| III. 1, 3. | I. 172. |
| IV. 10. | I. 172. |
| XI. 15. | I. 539. |
| XV. 18, 19. | I. 539. |
| XVI. 1. | I. 539. |
| XVII. 2, 3. | I. 539. |
| XVIII. 5. | I. 539. |

| ECCLESIAS-
TICUS. | |
|----------------------|-----------|
| XVII. 14. | II. 316. |
| XXXIX. 16. | III. 181. |
| XLIII. 11, 12. | II. 293. |
| XLIV. 16. | II. 171. |
| — 21, 22, 23. | III. 645. |
| XLV. 23, 24, 25. | II. 326. |
| XLVIII. 9. | II. 171. |
| — 10. | III. 719. |
| XLIX. 14. | II. 171. |

| BARUCH. | |
|--------------|-----------|
| II. 2, 3. | II. 323. |
| 1 MACCABEES. | |
| I. 54. | III. 710. |
| II. 54. | II. 326. |
| — 58. | II. 171. |

| 2 MACCABEES. | |
|-----------------|----------|
| IV. 34, 35, 36. | II. 269. |

| MATTHEW. | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| I. | I. 297. |
| — 1, 20. | III. 628. |
| — 6. | II. 297. |
| — 11. | II. 175. |
| — 16. | I. 144. |
| — 17. | I. 587. |
| — 21. | III. 634. |
| — 22, 23. | II. 177. |
| — 23. | I. 724. |
| — 25. | II. 177, 526. |
| — 25. | I. 131. |
| H. 1, &c. | I. 485. |
| — 6. | I. 234. |
| — 15. | II. 176. |
| — 17. | III. 148. |
| — 17, 18. | II. 181. |
| — 23. | I. 150. |
| — 23. | II. 280. |
| — 23. | I. 138. |
| — 23. | II. 279. |
| III. 5. | I. 487. |
| — 7. | I. 500. |
| — 8, 9, 11, 12. | III. 614. |
| — 12. | III. 720. |
| — 15. | III. 718. |
| Vol. III. | I. 485, 494. |

| MATTHEW.
Chap. and Ver. | Vol. and Page. |
|----------------------------|----------------|
| III. 16, 17. | I. 761. |
| IV. 1, &c. | I. 501. |
| — 9. | III. 264. |
| V. | III. 274. |
| — 13. | I. 111. |
| — 16, &c. 28. | II. 141. |
| — 17. | III. 732. |
| — 17, 18. | I. 494. |
| — 17, &c. | I. 456. |
| — 17, &c. 48. | I. 473. |
| — 20. | II. 537. |
| — 28, 29, 30. | III. 784. |
| — 28, 44. | I. 806. |
| — 29. | I. 9. |
| — 36. | I. 478. |
| — 38, 39, 43, 44. | III. 245. |
| — 45, 48. | I. 476. |
| — 39, 40, 41. | I. 803. |
| — 43. | I. 142. |
| — 44. | I. 805. |
| — 47. | II. [561]. |
| — 48. | III. 234. |
| VI. 10. | II. 340. |
| — 19, 24, &c. | II. 141. |
| — 23. | I. 706. |
| — 27. | III. 245. |
| — 28. | II. 499. |
| — 29. | II. 642. |
| VII. 12. | I. 475. |
| — 15. | III. 679. |
| VIII. 4. | I. 492, 494. |
| — 9, 11. | II. 856. |
| — 11. | I. 702. |
| — 16, 17. | II. 182. |
| — 17. | I. 181, 270. |
| — 19, 20. | III. 697. |
| — 23. | I. 482. |
| — 26. | I. 495. |
| — 26. | II. 499. |
| IX. 3, 11. | I. 500. |
| — 5. | III. 265. |
| — 12, 13. | I. 464. |
| — 13. | III. 261. |
| — 14, --- 17. | I. 261, 488. |
| — 35. | I. 491. |
| X. | I. 496. |
| — 11, 14. | I. 824. |
| — 19, 20. | I. 520. |
| — 28. | I. 220. |
| — 29. | I. 7. |
| — 29, 30. | II. 625. |
| — 34. | I. 467. |
| — 34, 35. | III. 679. |
| — 34, 35. | II. 182. |
| XI. | I. 732. |
| — 3. | III. 564. |
| — 10. | I. 771. |
| — 13. | I. 508. |
| — 14. | I. 711. |
| — 15. | I. 560. |
| — 18, 19. | III. 232. |
| — 28, 29. | I. 487. |
| — 29. | I. 464, 499. |
| — 30. | III. 718. |
| — 30. | I. 4. |
| XII. 3, &c. | I. 488. |
| — 3, 11, 24, 39. | I. 500. |
| — 10. | I. 501. |
| — 17. | II. 173. |
| — 18. | II. 175. |
| — 19, 20. | I. 499. |
| — 20. | I. 464. |
| — 23. | III. 626. |
| — 24. | I. 582. |
| — 25. | II. 165. |
| — 29. | I. 468. |
| — 32. | III. 266. |
| — 38. | III. 735. |
| | III. 276. |

| MATTHEW.
Chap. and Ver. | Vol. and Page. |
|----------------------------|----------------|
| XII. 39, 40. | I. 719. |
| — 40. | I. 136. |
| — 48. | I. 499. |
| XIII. 4. | I. 152. |
| — 10, --- 13. | I. 520. |
| — 11. | III. 232. |
| — 12. | I. 165, 202. |
| — 14. | II. 181. |
| — 14, 15. | III. 261. |
| — 17. | III. 611, 653. |
| — 19, 23. | II. 856. |
| — 25, 26. | III. 614. |
| — 34, 35. | II. 182, 279. |
| — 54, &c. | II. 854. |
| — 55. | I. 482. |
| — 58. | I. 54, 134. |
| XIV. 13. | I. 501. |
| — 23. | I. 487, 494. |
| XV. 2, 3, &c. 9, --- 14. | I. 489. |
| — 7, 8. | I. 152. |
| — 10, --- 20. | I. 691. |
| — 18. | III. 228. |
| — 22. | I. 55. |
| — 22, 24, &c. | III. 626. |
| — 24. | I. 497. |
| — 32, &c. | II. 297. |
| XVI. 3. | II. 854. |
| — 9. | II. 856. |
| — 20. | I. 499. |
| — 21. | I. 492. |
| — 22. | II. 168. |
| — 23. | III. 692. |
| — 23. | I. 487, 501. |
| XVII. 5. | II. 327. |
| — 10, 13. | I. 711. |
| — 11. | III. 719. |
| — 14, 18. | III. 265. |
| — 15. | I. 55. |
| — 20. | I. 495. |
| — 27. | I. 488. |
| XVIII. 2, &c. | I. 499. |
| — 3, 4. | I. 436. |
| — 17. | II. 546. |
| — 20. | II. 510. |
| — 24, 25. | I. 781. |
| XIX. 3, --- 6, 29. | I. 478. |
| — 6. | I. 479. |
| — 8. | I. 487. |
| — 11, 12. | I. 499. |
| — 13. | I. 132, 498. |
| — 17. | III. 89, 238. |
| — 28. | III. 645. |
| — 29. | III. 271. |
| XX. | III. 252. |
| — 18, 19. | I. 502. |
| — 19, 20, &c. | I. 713. |
| — 23. | I. 133. |
| — 26, 27, 28. | I. 499. |
| — 28. | I. 781. |
| — 30, 31. | III. 626. |
| XXI. 1, &c. | I. 490. |
| — 4, 5. | II. 174. |
| — 5. | I. 498. |
| — 9, 16. | I. 490. |
| — 12. | I. 490. |
| — 12, 13. | I. 494. |
| — 15. | III. 626. |
| — 17, 18. | I. 502. |
| — 23. | I. 492. |
| — 33, 41. | I. 711. |
| — 34. | I. 119. |
| — 37. | I. 518. |
| — 42, 44. | I. 726. |
| — 45, 46. | I. 711. |
| XXII. | III. 272. |
| — 2, 7. | I. 711. |
| — 15, &c. | I. 492. |
| — 18. | I. 501. |
| — 23, &c. | II. 854. |

| MATTHEW. | | MARK. | | LUKE. | |
|----------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------|----------------|
| Chap. and Ver. | Vol. and Page. | Chap. and Ver. | Vol. and Page. | Chap. and Ver. | Vol. and Page. |
| XXII. 29. | II. 559. | VIII. 15. | II. 856. | VIII. 48. | I. 54. |
| — 30. | I. 479. | — 31. | I. 136, 137. | IX. | III. 270. |
| — 32. | I. 261. | — 34. | I. 6. | — 10, 13. | I. 497. |
| — 36, &c. | I. 473. | — 36. | I. 478. | — 23. | II. 510. |
| — 37, 40. | I. 456. | — 38. | II. 531. | — 46. | I. 713. |
| — 41, 45. | I. 771. | IX. 9. | I. 719. | — 58. | III. 772. |
| — 42. | III. 564, 626. | — 10. | III. 692. | X. 16. | I. 598. |
| — 43. | III. 563. | — 24. | I. 5. | — 18. | III. 266. |
| — 48. | III. 686. | — 33, &c. | I. 713. | — 21. | I. 486. |
| XXIII. 1, 4. | I. 489. | — 39. | III. 126. | — 21, 22. | III. 760. |
| — 8. | II. 803. | X. 13. | I. 487. | — 24. | I. 494. |
| — 13, 17, 33. | I. 500. | — 47, 48. | III. 626. | — 36. | III. 611, 653. |
| — 23. | III. 720. | XI. 10. | III. 564. | — 41, 42. | I. 475. |
| — 33. | III. 614. | — 13. | I. 118. | — 496. | I. 496. |
| — 34, 35. | II. 182. | — 17. | I. 139. | XI. 13. | II. 144, 411. |
| — 37. | I. 497. | XII. 25. | III. 239. | — 22. | III. 675. |
| XXIV. | I. 824. | — 32, 33, 34. | I. 434. | — 27. | I. 496. |
| — 3. | I. 711. | — 34. | I. 473. | — 54. | I. 488. |
| — 5. | I. 97. | XIII. 2. | I. 97. | XII. 4, 5. | I. 809. |
| — 6, 7. | I. 98. | — 14, 15. | I. 99. | — 8. | II. 531. |
| — 14. | I. 100. | — 32. | I. 135. | — 13, 14. | I. 488. |
| — 15. | II. 316. | XIV. 33, 34. | I. 495. | — 20, 48. | I. 111. |
| — 15, 21. | III. 700. | — 59. | I. 488. | — 24. | II. 630. |
| — 24. | I. 99. | XV. 27, 28. | I. 789. | — 28. | III. 195. |
| — 30. | II. 174. | XVI. 2. | I. 123. | — 48. | I. 523. |
| — 48, &c. | II. 560. | — 3, 4. | I. 119. | — 53. | III. 679. |
| XXV. | III. 272. | — 15. | I. 518. | XIII. | III. 270. |
| — 6. | III. 752. | — 16. | I. 517. | — 7. | II. 159. |
| — 14, &c. | I. 523. | | II. 407. | — 15. | I. 488. |
| — 19. | I. 714. | | | — 31, 32, 33. | I. 490. |
| — 21. | II. 665. | | | XIV. 3, &c. | I. 498. |
| — 24. | II. 549, 551. | | | — 3, 7, 12, 15, 16. | I. 496. |
| — 46. | II. 552, 553. | | | — 17. | I. 510. |
| XXVI. 6. | I. 498. | | | — 35. | I. 111. |
| — 26. | I. 685, 757. | | | XVI. 2. | II. 665. |
| — 28. | I. 457, 464, 771. | | | — 9. | I. 111. |
| — 31. | I. 726, 789. | | | — 22, 23. | I. 702. |
| — 39. | I. 496. | | | — 31. | I. 266. |
| — 39, 42, 44. | I. 494. | | | XVII. | I. 824. |
| — 40, 41. | I. 499. | | | — 2. | III. 268. |
| — 50, 63. | I. 500. | | | — 20, 21. | III. 680. |
| — 53, 54. | I. 495. | | | XVIII. 38, 39. | III. 626. |
| — 53, 56. | I. 789. | | | — 42. | I. 54. |
| — 59, 60, 65. | I. 488. | | | XIX. | III. 272. |
| — 63, 64. | I. 491. | | | — 5. | I. 487. |
| — 63, 64, 65. | I. 502. | | | — 9, &c. | I. 498. |
| — 64. | II. 174. | | | — 10. | I. 497. |
| XXVII. 5. | I. 587. | | | — 11. | I. 233. |
| — 9. | I. 146. | | | — 12. | I. 714. |
| — 11. | I. 502. | | | — 12, 27. | I. 711. |
| — 24. | I. 489. | | | — 22. | I. 10. |
| — 26, &c. | I. 500. | | | — 41. | I. 486. |
| — 34, 35. | I. 789. | | | — 44. | I. 97. |
| — 46. | I. 495, 501. | | | — 47, 48. | I. 711. |
| — 46, 50. | I. 494. | | | XX. | I. 488. |
| — 51. | III. 774, 780. | | | XXI. | I. 824. |
| XXVIII. 1. | I. 122. | | | — 11. | I. 98. |
| — 9. | II. 348. | | | — 12, 16, 17. | III. 679. |
| — 18. | I. 512, 714. | | | — 19. | III. 680. |
| — 19. | I. 518, 761. | | | — 20, 21, 23, 24. | I. 99. |
| — 19, 20. | I. 510. | | | — 20, 24. | III. 710. |
| | | | | — 24. | I. 97. |
| | | | | | II. 187, 342. |
| | | | | | III. 141, 673. |
| | | | | | I. 495. |
| | | | | | III. 773. |
| | | | | | I. 777. |
| | | | | | I. 713. |
| | | | | | I. 499. |
| | | | | | III. 645. |
| | | | | | I. 490. |
| | | | | | I. 135. |
| | | | | | I. 495. |
| | | | | | II. 535. |
| | | | | | I. 500. |
| | | | | | I. 490. |
| | | | | | I. 55. |
| | | | | | I. 54. |
| | | | | | I. 488. |
| | | | | | LUKE. |

| LUKE. | Chap. and Ver. | Vol. and Page. |
|--------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| XXIII. | 20, 22. | I. 489. |
| — | 34. | I. 120, 121, 497. |
| — | 34, 42. | I. 503. |
| — | 43. | I. 495. |
| — | 46. | I. 495, 501, 771. |
| XXIV. | 11. | I. 14. |
| — | 13, 21, 33, 36, }
50, 51. | III. 343. |
| — | 15, 16, 31, 36, 37. | II. 348. |
| — | 21. | II. 178. |
| — | 21, 22, &c. 25, }
26, 27. | III. 692. |
| — | 21, 25, 26, 45, 48. | I. 713. |
| — | 25, 26. | II. 269. |
| — | 26. | II. 179, 535. |
| — | 26, 27, 44, 45, 46. | I. 789. |
| — | 47. | I. 521. |
| — | 48, 49. | III. 677. |
| — | 49, 50, 51. | III. 563. |
| — | — | II. 344. |

| JOHN. | Chap. and Ver. | Vol. and Page. |
|-------|----------------|----------------|
| I. | 1, --4. | II. 523. |
| — | 1, 2, 3, 14. | I. 771. |
| — | 2, 7. | I. 129. |
| — | 3, 4, 5. | II. 513. |
| — | 4, 16. | II. 536. |
| — | 9. | I. 725. |
| — | 9, 10. | I. 523. |
| — | 11. | I. 402. |
| — | — | III. 648. |
| — | 14. | III. 622, 772. |
| — | 14, 18. | II. 527. |
| — | 17, 29. | I. 685. |
| — | 18. | I. 328. |
| — | — | III. 262. |
| — | 19, 20, 49. | III. 564. |
| — | 21, 23. | III. 721. |
| — | — | I. 781. |
| — | 29. | I. 180. |
| — | — | III. 650, 720. |
| — | 32, 33. | I. 761. |
| — | 45. | I. 327. |
| — | — | III. 653. |
| — | 46. | I. 482. |
| II. | 2, 11. | I. 487. |
| — | 13, 14. | I. 494. |
| — | 14. | I. 490. |
| — | 16, 17. | I. 494. |
| — | 19. | III. 772. |
| — | 19, 21. | I. 771. |
| — | 20. | I. 126. |
| — | 21. | I. 488. |
| — | 23, 24. | I. 491. |
| III. | 1, &c. | I. 497. |
| — | 2. | I. 596. |
| — | — | III. 115, 265. |
| — | 5. | I. 511. |
| — | — | II. 537. |
| — | 11. | I. 129. |
| — | 12. | II. 858. |
| — | 13. | II. 174, 347. |
| — | 14. | III. 652. |
| — | 16. | I. 4, 783. |
| — | — | II. 407. |
| — | 16, 17. | I. 463. |
| — | 19. | I. 524. |
| — | — | III. 764. |
| — | 20, 21. | I. 198. |
| — | 26, 30. | III. 143. |
| — | 29. | I. 726. |
| — | 34. | I. 483. |
| IV. | 6, 7. | I. 498. |
| — | 10. | I. 496. |
| — | 10, 40. | I. 497. |
| — | 21. | I. 494. |
| — | 22. | III. 262. |
| — | 24. | I. 475. |
| — | 25. | I. 672. |
| — | — | III. 657. |

| JOHN. | Chap. and Ver. | Vol. and Page. |
|-------|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| IV. | 25, 42. | III. 564. |
| — | 27. | I. 499. |
| — | 31, 32, 34. | I. 498. |
| — | 34. | I. 494, 495. |
| V. | 1. | I. 494. |
| — | 6, 7, 14. | I. 497. |
| — | 19, &c. | I. 494. |
| — | 19, 21, 22, 23, 26. | I. 762. |
| — | 20. | II. 527. |
| — | 21. | I. 649. |
| — | — | II. 536. |
| — | 26. | I. 513. |
| — | 31. | I. 589. |
| — | 32, &c. | I. 501. |
| — | 36. | II. 178, 179. |
| — | 36, 39. | I. 488. |
| — | 39. | I. 551. |
| — | — | III. 232. |
| — | 39, 46. | I. 724. |
| — | — | III. 732. |
| — | 46. | II. 327. |
| VI. | 2, 33, 37, 41, }
42, 50, 51, 58. | II. 347. |
| — | 14. | I. 712. |
| — | — | III. 564. |
| — | 15. | I. 488, 498, 501. |
| — | 27. | II. 261, 496. |
| — | 29. | I. 819. |
| — | 35. | III. 773. |
| — | 38, 41, 42. | I. 429. |
| — | 43, 44. | I. 430. |
| — | 45. | I. 430, 431. |
| — | — | II. 504, 545. |
| — | 49, 51, 58. | III. 775. |
| — | 53, 60, 66. | I. 14. |
| — | 63, 68, 69. | II. 512. |
| VII. | 7, 10, 14, 25, 26 | I. 501. |
| — | 10. | I. 494. |
| — | 17. | I. 435. |
| — | — | III. 732. |
| — | 18. | I. 495, 589. |
| — | 24. | III. 270. |
| — | 31. | I. 639. |
| — | — | III. 126. |
| — | 37, 38, 39. | I. 508. |
| — | 38. | I. 143. |
| — | 38, 39. | III. 725. |
| — | 40. | I. 712. |
| — | 41, 42. | III. 564. |
| — | 46. | II. 87. |
| — | 52. | I. 482. |
| VIII. | 12. | I. 725. |
| — | 13. | I. 589. |
| — | 29. | I. 495. |
| — | 40, 45. | I. 491. |
| — | 44. | I. 500. |
| — | — | III. 264, 614. |
| — | 46. | I. 488, 589. |
| — | 47. | I. 430. |
| — | 49, 50. | I. 495, 498. |
| — | — | I. 705. |
| — | 56. | II. 424. |
| — | — | III. 637. |
| IX. | 3. | III. 270. |
| — | 7. | II. 313. |
| — | 30. | III. 125. |
| — | 34. | II. 843. |
| — | 39. | II. 771. |
| X. | 2, 9. | I. 726. |
| — | 14. | I. 499. |
| — | 16. | II. 175, 297. |
| — | 18. | I. 796. |
| — | — | II. 522, 536. |
| — | 24, 25, &c. | I. 501. |
| — | 25. | II. 178, 517. |
| — | 30. | II. 328. |
| — | 33, 35. | II. 527. |
| XI. | 5. | I. 486. |
| — | 7, 8, 9. | I. 502. |
| — | 8, 9. | I. 495. |

| JOHN. | Chap. and Ver. | Vol. and Page. |
|--------|---------------------|----------------|
| XI. | 10. | I. 494, 495. |
| — | 18. | II. 344. |
| — | 27. | III. 564. |
| — | 33, 35, 36. | I. 486. |
| — | 41, 42. | I. 495. |
| — | 49, --52. | II. 325. |
| — | 54. | I. 501. |
| XII. | 3. | I. 498. |
| — | 12. | I. 494, 502. |
| — | 27, 28. | I. 495. |
| — | 31. | III. 760. |
| — | 32. | III. 652. |
| — | 34. | II. 339. |
| — | 39, 40. | I. 111. |
| — | 40. | I. 112. |
| — | 41. | I. 771. |
| — | 42. | I. 594. |
| XIII. | — | I. 502. |
| — | 1. | I. 486. |
| — | 4, &c. | I. 499. |
| — | 18. | I. 789. |
| — | — | II. 280. |
| — | 23. | I. 486. |
| — | 34. | I. 128. |
| XIV. | — | I. 502. |
| — | 2. | II. 404. |
| — | 16. | I. 761. |
| — | 27. | III. 680. |
| — | 30. | III. 760. |
| XV. | — | I. 502. |
| — | 1. | I. 726. |
| — | 12. | I. 128. |
| — | 13. | I. 497. |
| — | 15. | I. 491. |
| — | 22. | I. 104. |
| — | 26. | I. 761. |
| XVI. | — | I. 502. |
| — | 2. | I. 824. |
| — | — | III. 679. |
| — | 4, 12, 14. | II. 348. |
| — | 4, 25. | I. 491. |
| — | 11. | III. 760. |
| — | 12, 13. | I. 491. |
| — | — | III. 564. |
| — | 13. | II. 530. |
| — | 28. | I. 494. |
| — | 32. | I. 495. |
| — | 33. | III. 680. |
| XVII. | — | I. 494, 502. |
| — | 1, 4. | I. 495. |
| — | 3. | I. 764. |
| — | 4. | I. 457. |
| — | 5. | II. 347. |
| XVIII. | — | II. 38. |
| — | 1, 2, 7, 8, 9. | I. 502. |
| — | 11. | I. 496. |
| — | 19, 20, 21. | I. 491. |
| — | 23. | I. 500. |
| — | 33, 37. | I. 491. |
| — | 36. | I. 488. |
| — | 37. | I. 430, 466. |
| XIX. | 14, 15, 17, 19, 26 | II. 348. |
| — | 23, 24, 28, 29, 30. | I. 789. |
| — | 25, 28, 29, 30. | I. 503. |
| — | 30. | I. 785. |
| — | 34, 37. | I. 771. |
| — | 36. | I. 729. |
| — | — | II. 180. |
| XX. | 19. | II. 343. |
| — | 28, 29. | II. 530. |
| — | 29. | I. 561. |
| — | — | II. 865. |
| XXI. | 1, 14. | II. 345. |
| — | 25. | I. 55, 639. |
| — | — | II. 801. |
| ACTS. | | |
| I. | 3, 9, 10, 11. | II. 345. |
| — | 4, 6, --12. | II. 344. |
| — | 6. | I. 713. [340. |
| — | — | II. 178, 276. |
| ACTS. | | |

| ACTS. | | ACTS. | | ROMANS. | |
|----------------|----------------|--------------------|-------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| Chap. and Ver. | Vol. and Page. | Chap. and Ver. | Vol. and Page. | Chap. and Ver. | Vol. and Page. |
| I. 7. | I. 714. | XIV. 17. | I. 54, 57, 463. | II. 16. | I. 807. |
| — 8. | III. 269, 683. | — 22. | II. 316. | — 25. | I. 684. |
| — 18. | II. 503. | XV. 18. | III. 218, 244. | — 28. | II. 171. |
| II. 4. | I. 587. | — 22. | III. 679. | — 28, 29. | III. 640, 740. |
| — 5. | I. 581. | XVI. 3. | I. 245. | — 29. | III. 641. |
| — 9, 10, 11. | III. 567. | — 6, 7, 9, 10. | III. 169. | III. 2. | II. 273. |
| — 17. | I. 56. | XVII. | I. 691. | — 4. | I. 290. |
| — 22. | II. 311. | — 2, 3, 4, 11, 12. | I. 519. | — 7, 9. | III. 162. |
| — 25, &c. | II. 519. | — 11. | III. 269. | — 19, 20. | II. 171. |
| — 29, 30, 31. | I. 270. | — 18. | II. 270. | — 20. | I. 687. |
| — 30. | III. 563. | — 18, 19, 20, 25. | II. 802, 857. | — 21. | I. 706. |
| — 33. | II. 663. | — 21. | I. 14. | — 23. | III. 50, 725. |
| — 36. | I. 714. | — 24. | I. 12. | — 24. | I. 705. |
| — 37, 41. | I. 765. | — 26, ---31. | III. 54, 772. | — 25. | III. 261. |
| — 38, 39. | II. 269. | — 27. | I. 13. | — 24, 25, 26. | III. 724. |
| — 41. | I. 508, 511. | — 28. | I. 160, 523. | — 25. | II. 535. |
| III. 17. | II. 552. | — 30. | II. 506. | — 31. | I. 781. |
| — 18, 24. | III. 160. | — 30, 31. | I. 14, 15, 523. | IV. 6, 7, 8. | II. 540. |
| — 21. | II. 270. | — 31. | I. 57, 163. | — 11. | I. 670. |
| — 22. | I. 160. | — 32. | II. 223. | — 11, 13, 16, 17. | I. 687. |
| — 22, 23. | II. 719. | — 33. | I. 316. | — 12. | I. 686, 732. |
| IV. 11. | III. 721. | — 34. | III. 263. | — 14. | III. 640. |
| — 18, 19, 20. | II. 520. | XVIII. 10, 11. | II. 273. | — 15. | II. 171. |
| — 25, &c. | III. 653. | — 24, 28. | I. 558. | — 19. | I. 696. |
| — 27. | II. 327. | — 33. | I. 14. | — 21. | I. 706. |
| — 46. | III. 563. | — 34. | I. 55. | — 25. | II. 299. |
| V. 3, 4. | I. 726. | XIX. 4. | I. 520. | — 31. | II. 307. |
| — 15. | I. 579. | — 12. | II. 270. | — 31. | I. 777, 785. |
| — 31. | II. 282. | XX. 28. | III. 720, 721. | V. 1, 11. | III. 680. |
| — 38. | I. 56. | — 29, 30. | II. 552. | — 2. | III. 773. |
| VI. 15. | I. 579. | XXI. 24, 25. | I. 763, 782. | — 6, 8, 10. | I. 497. |
| — 38. | II. 763. | XXII. 3. | II. 528, 539. | — 6, 10. | I. 6. |
| — 41. | III. 552. | — 8. | III. 679. | — 8. | I. 777. |
| — 42. | I. 714. | XXIII. 1, 13. | I. 691. | — 12. | II. 362, 396, 844. |
| — 48. | II. 504, 537. | — 17. | II. 312. | — 12, 14. | III. 260. |
| — 59. | III. 134. | — 18. | I. 439. | — 12, ---19. | I. 686. |
| VII. 5. | II. 441. | — 22, 23, 27, 28. | I. 250, 266. | — 14. | II. 415, 844. |
| — 6, 7. | II. 171, 297. | XXIV. 15. | II. 551. | — 15, ---19. | II. 396. |
| — 37. | III. 299, 301. | XXV. 9. | II. 551, 552. | — 15, &c. | I. 521. |
| — 38. | III. 656, 740. | XXVI. 9. | I. 14. | — 19. | II. 844. |
| — 42. | II. 300. | — 17. | I. 439. | VI. 9. | III. 687, 772. |
| — 48. | I. 327. | — 18. | II. 56. | VII. 2, 6. | I. 696. |
| — 59. | III. 653. | — 22, 23, 27, 28. | II. 537. | — 5, 7, 8, 22, 23. | III. 251. |
| VIII. | I. 705. | XXVIII. 4. | II. 270. | — 8, 10, 23, 24, 25. | I. 508. |
| — 27, ---36. | III. 740. | — 22. | I. 824. | — 12. | III. 250, 262, 267. |
| — 29. | III. 772. | — 25, 26. | I. 763. | — 12, 14. | I. 509. |
| — 32. | I. 834. | — 25, 26. | II. 543. | — 13. | III. 250. |
| — 34, &c. | I. 790. | ROMANS. | III. 50. | — 14. | I. 706. |
| X. | I. 691. | I. | III. 468. | — 18, 19. | I. 505. |
| — 10. | I. 500. | — 3. | I. 631. | — 23. | I. 445, 505. |
| — 34, 35. | II. 272. | — 4. | I. 483. | — 24. | II. 844. [241. |
| — 38. | I. 691. | — 5. | II. 402. | — 24, 25. | III. 157, 228, |
| — 43. | I. 221. | — 17. | I. 56. | VIII. 1, ---4. | III. 261. |
| — 44. | I. 521. | — 18, 19, 20. | III. 50. | — 2. | III. 597. |
| — 45. | I. 496. | — 19. | I. 523. | — 3. | I. 508. |
| — 46. | II. 270. | — 19, 20. | II. 122. | — 3, 4. | I. 511. |
| — 47. | I. 691. | — 20. | I. 432. | — 7. | II. 536. |
| — 48. | I. 620. | — 20, 25, 28. | III. 179, 262. | — 9, 10. | I. 263, 777. |
| — 49. | II. 343. | — 21. | II. 497, 503. | — 11. | III. 680. |
| — 50. | I. 40. | — 21, 25. | III. 12, 52, 244. | — 18. | I. 688. |
| — 51. | I. 763. | — 21, 28. | II. 542. | — 19. | II. 845. |
| — 52. | I. 734. | — 22. | II. 209. | — 19, ---23. | III. 772. |
| — 53. | I. 783. | — 23. | I. 465. | — 20, 21, 22. | I. 761. |
| — 54. | II. 339. | — 24. | II. 125. | — 23. | I. 478. |
| — 55. | II. 272. | — 25. | II. 506. | — 24. | III. 706. |
| — 56. | III. 663. | — 26. | I. 446. | — 25. | I. 512. |
| — 57. | III. 725. | — 27. | III. 93. | — 26. | I. 450. |
| — 58. | I. 438. | — 28. | III. 261. | — 27. | II. 123. |
| — 59. | I. 5, 620. | — 29. | I. 6, 521. | — 28. | I. 513. |
| — 60. | III. 263. | — 30. | II. 316. | — 29. | I. 463. |
| — 61. | I. 56. | — 31. | I. 523. | — 30. | III. 146. |
| — 62. | I. 53. | — 32. | II. 369. | — 31. | I. 107. |
| — 63. | I. 54. | — 33. | III. 274. | — 32. | II. 179, 424. |
| — 64. | I. 55. | — 34. | I. 168. | — 33. | II. 147. |
| — 65. | II. 343. | — 35. | II. 214. | — 34. | II. 180. |
| — 66. | I. 56. | — 36. | III. 244. | — 35. | II. 305. |
| — 67. | I. 13, 56. | — 37. | I. 432. | — 36. | III. 644. |
| — 68. | II. 85, 119. | — 38. | II. 85, 119. | — 37. | I. 686. |
| — 69. | III. 210. | — 39. | III. 210. | — 38. | I. 26. |
| — 70. | RO. | — 40. | RO. | — 39. | III. 210. |

| ROMANS. | | Vol. and Page. |
|---------------------|--|----------------|
| Chap. and Ver. | | |
| IX. 22. ————— | | II. 560. |
| — 25, 27. ————— | | II. 170. |
| — 31, 32, 33. ————— | | I. 771. |
| — 33. ————— | | I. 726. |
| X. 4. ————— | | { I. 688. |
| — 6, &c. ————— | | { III. 770. |
| — 7. ————— | | I. 693. |
| — 11. ————— | | II. 346. |
| — 12. ————— | | II. 434. |
| — 14. ————— | | III. 640, 680. |
| — 17. ————— | | I. 517. |
| — 18. ————— | | II. 857. |
| — 19, — XI. 12. — | | I. 726. |
| — 25, 26. ————— | | { III. 639. |
| XI. ————— | | I. 686. |
| — 20, 21. ————— | | I. 735. |
| — 25. ————— | | III. 379. |
| — 25, 26. ————— | | III. 673. |
| — 25, 29. ————— | | II. 187. |
| — 33. ————— | | III. 233. |
| — 33, 34. ————— | | I. 516. |
| XII. 1. ————— | | { I. 8. |
| — 3, 10. ————— | | { II. 857. |
| — 6. ————— | | { III. 232. |
| — 6. ————— | | I. 804. |
| — 6. ————— | | { II. 732. |
| — 6. ————— | | { III. 725. |
| XIII. 8. ————— | | I. 128. |
| — 8, 9. ————— | | I. 475. |
| — 14. ————— | | III. 779. |
| XIV. 9. ————— | | I. 513. |
| — 17. ————— | | III. 680. |
| — 23. ————— | | II. 800. |
| XV. 1. ————— | | I. 804. |
| — 11. ————— | | I. 56. |
| — 13. ————— | | III. 680. |
| XVI. 20. ————— | | { II. 170. |
| — 25, 26. ————— | | { III. 618. |
| — 26. ————— | | III. 233. |
| — 26. ————— | | { I. 56. |
| — 26. ————— | | { II. 545. |

1 CORINTHIANS

| | |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| I. 10. | II. 829. |
| — 13. | I. 212. |
| — 18. | II. 509. |
| — 18, 20. | II. 496. |
| — 19, 20. | II. 846. |
| — 20. | III. 366. |
| — 21. | II. 495, 497, 503, 504. |
| — 22. | I. 631. |
| — 23. | I. 632. |
| — 24. | I. 633. |
| — 25. | I. 634, 823. |
| — 26. | II. 505. |
| — 27, 28, 29. | II. 507. |
| II. 2. | II. 632. |
| — 4. | III. 135. |
| — 5. | II. 803. |
| — 6. | I. 696. |
| — 6, 7, 10, 11, 15. | II. 853. |
| — 7, 8. | II. 281. |
| — 9. | III. 760. |
| — 9. | I. 4. |
| — 9, 10, 11. | I. 747. |
| — 10, 11. | II. 504. |
| — 12, 13, 14. | I. 738. |
| — 14. | I. 441. |
| — 14. | II. 504, 846. |
| III. | II. 545. |
| — 5, 6. | I. 511. |
| — 18, 19, 20. | II. 847. |
| — 19. | II. 505. |
| IV. 5. | I. 807. |
| — 7. | I. 804. |
| — 9, 10. | III. 389. |
| V. 6, 7, 8. | II. 181. |
| — 7. | I. 686, 781. |
| — 7. | II. 534. |

Vol. III.

1 CORINTHIANS

| Chap. and Ver. | Vol. and Page. |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| V. 7, 8, 21. | I. 685. |
| VI. 9, 10. | III. 468. |
| — 9, 10, 11, 20. | I. 781. |
| — 19. | III. 772. |
| VIII. 2. | II. 497. |
| — 6. | I. 451. |
| IX. 8, 9, 10, 13, 14. | II. 181. |
| — 19. | I. 827. |
| — 20. | I. 691. |
| X. | I. 705. |
| — 1, — 11. | II. 180. |
| — 6, 11. | I. 735. |
| — 6, 11. | II. 181. |
| — 6, 11. | III. 651. |
| — 9. | I. 771. |
| — 9. | II. 525. |
| — 13. | I. 478, 513. |
| — 13. | III. 266. |
| — 15. | II. 857. |
| — 16. | I. 511. |
| XI. 1. | I. 509. |
| — 11, 12. | III. 619. |
| — 24, 25, 26. | III. 773. |
| XII. 8, 21, 25, 26. | II. 674. |
| — 12. | III. 198. |
| XIII. 7. | I. 804. |
| — 11. | III. 219. |
| XIV. 8. | I. 56. |
| — 20, 29. | II. 857. |
| — 31, 32. | II. 849. |
| XV. | III. 249. |
| — 5, 6. | III. 260. |
| — 20. | I. 698. |
| — 21, 22. | II. 393. |
| — 22, 45, 47. | III. 619. |
| — 24, 28. | II. 347. |
| — 24, 28. | III. 688. |
| — 25. | III. 686. |
| — 26, 54. | III. 687. |
| — 27, 28. | I. 765. |
| — 35. | II. 559. |
| — 38. | III. 199. |
| — 45. | I. 686. [545. |
| — 45. | II. 394, 415. |
| — 45. | III. 200. |

2 CORINTHIANS

| | |
|------------------|----------------|
| I. 20. | III. 727. |
| — 21. | II. [562]. |
| III. 3, 6, — 9. | I. 509. |
| — 6. | I. 511, 706. |
| — 6, — 9. | III. 726. |
| — 7, 11, 13, 14. | I. 696. |
| — 7, &c. | III. 770. |
| — 13, — 18. | I. 763. |
| — 18. | III. 774. |
| IV. 3, 4. | II. 771. |
| — 4. | III. 264, 760. |
| — 17. | I. 809. |
| — 18. | III. 271. |
| — 18. | II. [562]. |
| V. 4. | I. 512. |
| — 6. | III. 622. |
| — 14. | II. 388. |
| — 14, 15, 21. | I. 777. |
| — 21. | I. 780, 782. |
| VIII. 2. | I. 5. |
| — 9. | I. 484. |
| — 13, 14, 15. | II. 181. |
| X. 4, 5, &c. | II. 847. |
| — 5. | III. 660, 718. |
| — 14. | I. 761. |
| XI. 3. | III. 255, 618. |
| — 3, 14, 15. | III. 506. |
| XII. 4. | III. 274. |
| — 9. | I. 478, 513. |
| — 12. | I. 55. |
| XIII. 5. | II. 857. |
| — 8, 10, 11. | III. 772. |
| — 14. | I. 696. |
| — 14. | II. 528. |
| XV. 26. | I. 696. |

GALATIANS.

| Chap. and Ver. | Vol. and Page. |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| I. 4. | I. 777. |
| — 8. | III. 123, 126. |
| — 8, 9. | I. 237. |
| — 14. | I. 683. |
| II. 14. | I. 56. |
| — 16. | I. 706. |
| — 21. | I. 688. |
| III. 7, 8, 9, 14, 29. | III. 640. |
| — 7, 9. | I. 690. |
| — 8. | II. 274, 296. |
| — 11, 14. | III. 725. |
| — 13. | I. 777, 780, 781. |
| — 13. | II. 180. |
| — 13. | III. 727. |
| — 16. | II. 172, 296. |
| — 16. | III. 563. |
| — 17. | I. 705, 732, 771. |
| — 19. | I. 451, 703. |
| — 24. | III. 731, 770. |
| — 27. | III. 779. |
| IV. 1. | I. 232, 703. |
| — 4. | III. 731. |
| — 8. | I. 235, 494, 518. |
| — 21, &c. | II. 845. |
| — 22, 23. | II. 179, 180. |
| — 22, 23. | II. 299. |
| — 22, &c. | I. 686. |
| — 24. | III. 637. |
| — 24. | II. 179. |
| — 26. | I. 702. |
| — 26. | III. 638. |
| — 26. | I. 696. |
| V. 4. | III. 725. |
| — 14. | I. 475. |
| — 22. | III. 247. |
| VI. 1. | I. 804. |
| — 15. | I. 684. |

EPHESIANS.

| | |
|--------------------|----------------|
| I. 1, 3, 12. | I. 466. |
| — 3, 20. | II. 346. |
| — 4, 5. | I. 705. |
| — 6, 7. | III. 725. |
| — 7. | II. 534. |
| — 17, 18. | II. 504. |
| — 19. | I. 5. |
| — 19, 20. | II. 536. |
| — 20, 21. | III. 772. |
| — 20, 21, 22. | I. 512. |
| II. 1, 13, 15, 16. | I. 781. |
| — 2. | III. 264, 760. |
| — 2, 6. | II. 346. |
| — 3. | II. 844. |
| — 4, 7, 8, 9. | III. 725. |
| — 12. | II. 537. |
| — 13, &c. | III. 681. |
| — 14. | III. 742. |
| — 15. | III. 640. |
| — 20. | I. 726. |
| — 20, 21, 22. | III. 772. |
| — 22. | III. 665. |
| III. 9. | I. 685. |
| — 9, 10. | II. 281. |
| — 9, 10, 11. | I. 705. |
| — 10. | II. 346. |
| — 18. | II. 529. |
| — 20, &c. | III. 701. |
| IV. 9. | II. 346. |
| — 10. | II. 345, 527. |
| — 17, 18, 19. | III. 468. |
| — 18, 19. | II. 122. |
| — 31, 32. | I. 804. |
| V. 1. | III. 234. |
| — 2. | I. 777, 783. |
| — 6. | III. 777. |
| — 14. | II. 857. |
| — 14. | III. 774. |
| VI. 12. | II. 346. |
| — 12. | III. 760. |

(9 R)

PHI.

| PHILIPPIANS. | | 2 TIMOTHY. | | HEBREWS. | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|----------------|---|-------------------|
| Chap. and Ver. | Vol. and Page. | Chap. and Ver. | Vol. and Page. | Chap. and Ver. | Vol. and Page. |
| I. 23. | I. 699. | I. 6. | II. 665. | VII. 11, 13, --16, }
20, 23, 24, 28. } | III. 750. |
| II. 3. | I. 804. | — 9. | I. 232. | — 12. | III. 749. |
| — 5, --8. | I. 484. | — 9, 10. | III. 725. | — 12, 19. | I. 689. |
| — 6. | II. 526. | — 10. | I. 705. | — 14. | III. 631. |
| — 9. | I. 783. | — 10. | I. 4, 157. | — 14, 26, 27, 28. | III. 779. |
| — 9, 10, 11. | I. 765. | — 10. | II. 549, 551. | — 16. | I. 706. |
| — 10. | II. 346. | — 10. | III. 269, 641. | — 19. | III. 727. |
| — 12. | I. 7. | II. 12. | III. 689. | — 25. | I. 783. |
| — 12, 13. | II. 540. | III. 1. | II. 311. | — 25. | III. 777. |
| — 13. | III. 246. | — 9. | II. 857. | — 26. | I. 487. |
| III. 3. | I. 181. | — 12. | I. 824. | — 27. | II. 345. |
| — 13. | III. 740. | — 16. | III. 680. | — 27. | I. 782. |
| — 19. | III. 220. | — 17. | I. 210. | VIII. — | I. 780, 782. |
| — 20. | I. 5. | IV. 17. | I. 540. | — 2. | III. 777. |
| — 21. | III. 784. | | I. 56. | — 4, 5. | I. 684. |
| — 21. | II. 550. | TITUS. | | — 5. | II. 181. |
| IV. 7. | III. 687. | I. 2, 3. | I. 233. | — 5, 6, 10. | I. 511. |
| — 8. | I. 473. | II. 11. | III. 247. | — 6. | I. 451. |
| — 8. | II. 142. | — 11, 12. | I. 473. | — 7, --12. | III. 641. |
| — 13. | III. 244. | — 12. | I. 5. | — 8, 13. | I. 688. |
| | I. 8. | — 13. | III. 784. | — 8, &c. | I. 690. |
| COLOSSIANS. | | — 14. | II. 558. | — 10. | III. 756. |
| I. 6, 23. | II. 315. | — 14. | I. 781. | — 13. | II. 510, 514. |
| — 15. | II. 402. | III. 4. | I. 463. | — 13. | I. 241, 692. |
| — 15, 16, 17. | II. 526. | — 5. | III. 773. | IX. — | I. 782. |
| — 16. | I. 771. | — 5, 6. | I. 511. | — 1. | II. 180. |
| — 17. | II. 513. | | | — 1, 9, 10, 11. | I. 686. |
| — 20. | I. 785. | HEBREWS. | | — 2, 9, 12. | II. 181. |
| — 20, 21, 22. | I. 781. | I. 1. | I. 686. | — 3, 4. | III. 775. |
| — 23. | II. 297. | — 1, 2. | I. 685. | — 3, 24. | III. 774. |
| — 26. | I. 685. | — 2. | II. 402. | — 5. | III. 771. |
| — 26, 27. | III. 611. | — 2, 3. | II. 524. | — 7. | I. 783. |
| II. 3. | III. 771. | — 2, --7, 10, 11, 12. | I. 762. | — 7, 15. | I. 451. |
| — 4. | II. 854. | — 3. | I. 464, 784. | — 8, --12. | I. 784. |
| — 9. | II. 526. | — 3, 13. | II. 223, 523. | — 9, 10. | I. 689. |
| — 9. | III. 622, 772. | — 4, --10, 13. | I. 765. | — 9, 13, 14. | III. 725. |
| — 10, 11, 17. | II. 181. | — 5. | I. 771. | — 10. | I. 511. |
| — 11. | III. 740. | — 8. | II. 277, 335. | — 10, 13, 14. | III. 640. |
| — 11, 12. | I. 684. | — 9. | III. 665. | — 11. | I. 687. |
| — 14. | I. 691. | — 14. | II. 526, 527. | — 12, 14, 26. | III. 726. |
| — 14, 15. | I. 785. | — 9. | III. 779. | — 13. | I. 781. |
| — 15. | III. 660, 675, 766. | — 14. | II. 779. | — 13. | I. 706. |
| — 17. | I. 685. | II. 5. | II. 347. | — 13, 14. | I. 464. |
| III. 1. | III. 770. | — 6, &c. | III. 240. | — 13, 14, 23, &c. | III. 652, 776. |
| | II. 402. | — 9. | II. 173. | — 14. | I. 782. |
| 1 THESSALONI-
NIANS. | | — 11, 14, --17. | III. 735. | — 14, 24. | III. 773, 779. |
| I. 10. | II. 391. | — 14. | II. 271. | — 22. | III. 777. |
| II. 10. | III. 489. | — 14. | I. 521, 777. | — 22, --26. | I. 684. |
| IV. 17. | II. 347, 551. | — 14. | II. 393. | — 23, --26. | I. 784. |
| V. 10. | I. 781. | — 14. | I. 696. | — 23, &c. 24. | II. 181. |
| — 20. | II. 731. | — 14, --17. | II. 391. | — 25, &c. | I. 686. |
| | | — 16. | III. 766. | — 25, 26. | III. 780. |
| 2 THESSALON. | | — 16. | I. 795. | — 26. | I. 521. |
| II. 3. | II. 188. | — 16. | II. 526. | — 26, 28. | I. 235. |
| — 4. | II. 186, 189. | III. 2, 5. | III. 727. | — 27. | I. 777. |
| — 9. | I. 595. | — 4. | I. 686, 702. | — 27, 28. | III. 200. |
| — 9, 10, 11. | III. 118. | — 5. | III. 732. | — 28. | I. 243. |
| — 11. | II. 328. | — 9, 15. | I. 180. | — 28. | I. 263. |
| 1 TIMOTHY. | | — 12. | III. 3, 782. | X. — | II. 182. |
| I. 9. | III. 271. | IV. 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 9. | II. 180. | — 1. | I. 780, 782. |
| — 15. | I. 440, 783. | — 9. | II. 175. | — 1. | I. 684, 685, 788. |
| — 17. | III. 146. | — 14. | II. 345. | — 1, 2. | II. 181, 272. |
| — 17. | II. 509. | — 15, 16. | I. 513. | — 1, 7. | III. 770. |
| II. 5. | III. 773. | V. — | I. 712. | — 1, 2. | I. 688. |
| — 5, 6. | I. 521. | — 1, 4. | I. 779. | — 1, 7. | III. 726. |
| — 6. | I. 781. | — 5. | III. 779. | — 4. | I. 782. |
| IV. 1, &c. | I. 188. | — 7, 8, 9. | I. 783. | — 4. | II. 376. |
| — 3. | I. 6. | — 9. | I. 4. | — 4, 5, 6. | III. 725, 776. |
| — 10. | II. 665. | — 11. | II. 530. | — 4, 5, 6. | I. 687. |
| — 14. | I. 502. | — 12. | II. 865. | — 4, 10, 14. | I. 464. |
| VI. 13. | I. 764. | VI. — | I. 712. | — 5, 6, 7, 10. | I. 457. |
| — 15, 16. | II. 181. | — 1. | II. 865. | — 8, 10. | I. 685. |
| — 18. | | — 17. | III. 684. | — 9, 10, 29. | I. 781. |
| | | — 20. | III. 774. | — 10, 14, --18. | I. 688. |
| | | VII. — | I. 712, 782. | — 12. | I. 777. |
| | | — 3, 16, 17. | III. 775. | — 12. | III. 777. |
| | | — 5. | III. 773. | — 12, 13, 14. | I. 784. |
| | | — 7. | III. 563. | — 15, 16. | I. 763. |
| | | — 11. | I. 688. | — 15, --17. | I. 688. |

| HEBREWS. | | 1 PETER. | | JUDE. | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| Chap. and Ver. | Vol. and Page. | Chap. and Ver. | Vol. and Page. | Chap. and Ver. | Vol. and Page. |
| X. 19, 20. | I. 771, 783. | II. 9. | III. 773, 779. | — 5. | I. 764. |
| — 19, --- 22. | I. 464. | — 19, &c. | I. 501. | — 6. | { II. 559. |
| — 23. | III. 783. | — 19, 20. | III. 621. | — 7. | { III. 264. |
| — 26, 27, 29. | I. 459. | — 21. | I. 481. | — 12. | II. 304. |
| — 27, 31. | I. 7. | — 22. | { I. 487, 782. | — 14, 15. | II. 537. |
| — 29. | II. 409. | — 24. | { II. 336. | — 18. | { I. 517. |
| XI. 1. | { I. 615. | — 24. | { I. 777, 780, 781 | | { III. 623. |
| — 2. | { III. 21. | III. 3. | I. 261. | | II. 311. |
| — 4. | III. 624. | — 12. | II. 558. | REVELATIONS. | |
| — 4, 5. | III. 22. | — 13. | II. 442. | I. 5. | { I. 781. |
| — 5, 9, 10, 13, 14, }
16, 35. | II. 171. | — 15. | II. 801, 857. | — 6. | { II. 180. |
| — 5, 13, 16, 24, --- 26. | I. 701. | — 18. | I. 777, 782. | — 7. | III. 773. |
| — 6. | { I. 522. | — 19, 20. | I. 705. | — 8. | II. 517, 558. |
| | { II. 203, 407. | — 20. | II. 290. | — 14. | II. 526, 527. |
| | { III. 22, 232. | — 20, 21. | I. 686. | II. 4, 5. | I. 520. |
| — 7. | { II. 290. | — 22. | I. 762. | — 17. | II. 325. |
| — 9. | { III. 519. | IV. 1. | I. 777. | — 23. | III. 775. |
| — 12. | II. 297, 301. | — 1, 2. | I. 498. | — 21. | I. 762. |
| — 13. | II. 295, 299. | — 10. | III. 725. | — 21. | { I. 726. |
| — 14. | II. 301. | V. 5. | I. 436. | — 21. | { II. 174. |
| — 16. | II. 376. | | | — 21. | III. 689. |
| — 20. | { I. 85. | 2 PETER. | | IV. 8. | I. 770. |
| — 22. | { III. 638. | I. 1. | I. 714. | V. 5. | II. 174. |
| — 25. | II. 305. | — 3. | II. 792. | — 12, 13. | I. 765. |
| — 25, 26. | II. 375. | — 16, --- 19. | I. 707. | VI. 10. | I. 714. |
| — 26. | I. 732. | — 19. | III. 774, 782. | VII. 4, &c. 9. | III. 645. |
| — 27. | I. 233. | — 19, 20, 21. | { I. 708. | VIII. 3, 4. | III. 774, 781. |
| XII. 2, 3. | I. 149, 705. | — 20. | { II. 266. | IX. 3, 5, 10. | II. 274. |
| — 16, 17. | I. 499. | — 20, 21. | II. 176. | XI. 2, 3. | II. 185. |
| — 18. | III. 644. | — 21. | II. 848. | — 3. | II. 186. |
| — 21. | III. 657. | | I. 197. | — 4. | II. 728. |
| — 24. | I. 686. | II. 5. | { I. 517. | — 15. | { II. 170. |
| — 26. | I. 451. | — 6. | { II. 291. | — 18. | { III. 677. |
| — 26, 27. | II. 174. | — 15. | III. 622. | — 19. | I. 714. |
| — 27. | I. 690. | — 15. | II. 290, 304. | XII. 3, 4, 9. | III. 774. |
| XIII. 8. | III. 706. | III. 1, &c. | II. 291. | — 6. | III. 618. |
| — 11, 12. | { I. 705. | — 3. | II. 311. | — 6, 14. | II. 186. |
| — 20. | { III. 728. | — 3, 14. | II. 557. | — 7, 8, 9. | II. 185. |
| | I. 685. | — 4, 10. | II. 558. | — 9. | II. 287. |
| | II. 409. | — 8. | III. 179. | — 9. | II. 274. |
| | | — 9. | III. 270. | XIII. | I. 714. |
| | | — 11, --- 14. | II. 342. | — 2, 5, --- 8. | II. 188. |
| | | — 13. | II. 170. | — 5, 7. | II. 185. |
| | | — 14. | II. 560. | — 5, 7, 8. | II. 186. |
| | | — 18. | III. 725. | — 8. | { I. 230. [728. |
| | | | | | { III. 697, 727. |
| | | | | — 12, 13, 14, 16, 17. | II. 188. |
| | | | | — 16. | II. 728. |
| | | | | XIV. 10. | II. 157. |
| | | | | XVII. 2, 4. | II. 177. |
| | | | | — 2, 5, 6, 9, 18. | II. 189. |
| | | | | — 3, 7, 13, 15, 17. | II. 188. |
| | | | | — 12. | II. 186. |
| | | | | — 18. | II. 324. |
| | | | | XVIII. | I. 714. |
| | | | | — 3, 4. | II. 177. |
| | | | | — 23, 24. | II. 189. |
| | | | | XIX. | I. 714. |
| | | | | — 8. | III. 779. |
| | | | | — 10. | II. 516. |
| | | | | — 13. | II. 522. |
| | | | | XX. 2. | II. 274, 287, 347. |
| | | | | — 6. | III. 773. |
| | | | | — 6, 7, &c. | III. 689. |
| | | | | — 14. | II. 389. |
| | | | | XXI. 2. | III. 638. |
| | | | | — 4. | III. 234. |
| | | | | — 8. | II. 389. |
| | | | | — 22, --- 25. | III. 689. |
| | | | | XXII. 1, 2. | II. 172. |
| | | | | — 1, 3, 5. | III. 689. |
| | | | | — 12. | III. 274. |
| | | | | — 16. | { II. 174. |
| | | | | | { III. 664. |

An Alphabetical INDEX of the Greek Words and Phrases, explained in these *Three Volumes* of SERMONS.

Α Βύσσος II. 389.
 Αγαθοποιῶν I. 57.
 Ἀδελφόν I. 169.
 Εἰς νῦν ἀδελφίμων II. 542.
 Ἀδελφόν I. 781.
 Αἰώνιος II. 157.
 Ἐπὶ ἐλπίδι ζωῆς αἰώνιος II. 551.
 Περὶ χρόνων αἰώνων } I. 232, 233.
 } II. 553.
 Ἀνατλήσων π I. 371.
 Ἀλλὰ I. 133.
 Ἀλλοίωσις III. 302.
 Ἀναζωπυρεῖν τὸ χρεῖσμα II. 665.
 Ἀνάστασις mistaken for a } I. 14.
 Goddesses — }
 Ἀναστήσασθαι what I. 14.
 Ἀνατίλαν I. 123.
 Ἀνατολή I. 726.
 Ἀνδραπίνης φύσεως περικοπή I. 135.
 Τὸ ἀνδραπίνον περικοπή I. 135.
 Ἀνοία I. 423.
 Τὸ ἀντάλλαγμα II. 399.
 Ἀντὶ II. 534.
 Ἀντίλυτρον II. 534.
 Ἀντίψυχα I. 790.
 Ἀπατέω I. 98.
 Ἀπατεῶνες I. 97.
 Ἀπήγατο I. 587.
 Ἀπογεφῆ I. 568.
 Ἀποκαταστήσει III. 719.
 Τὰ ἀποκείμενα αὐτοῦ II. 173.
 Ἀπολίθωσις } τῆ νοητικῆς I. 399.
 Ἀπνεκρωσις }
 Ἀρκευθῶ I. 56.
 Ἀρρητα III. 274.
 Ἀρρητοποιοί II. 506.
 Ἀρχαῖοι I. 145.
 Ἀρχων III. 760.
 Αὐτοκρατορία I. 361.
 Αὐτόματιν I. 44.
 Ἐν αὐχμηρῷ τόπῳ I. 708.
 Ἀφελῆς διδῶ II. 551, 553.
 Τὸ ἐλεπτόν I. 57, 75, 80, 86.
 Τῶν μηδέπω ἐλεπομένων II. 290.
 Τὸ λογιζόμενον ἀδελφόν γάλα II. 857.
 Γερουσία III. 588.
 Γραμματεὺς II. 496.
 Δαίμονες I. 43.
 Δαίμονες & θεοὶ the Dis- } I. 452.
 tinction between them }
 Δαίμονες a sort of Me- } I. 452.
 diators — }
 Δέλεια I. 56.
 Δημευγὸς II. 148.
 Δι II. 345.
 Δι αὐτῶ I. 452.
 Δικαιώματα σαρκὸς I. 687.
 Δοκεῖτε I. 247.
 Δρακονίδης ἀρχὴν I. 392.

Δύναμις I. 54.
 Οὐκ δύναμις I. 410.
 Δυνατὸν I. 134.
 Ἐβέβλητο I. 265.
 Ἐγένετο III. 727.
 Ἐθνή I. 56.
 Εἰ μὴ I. 133.
 Εἰς αὐτὸν I. 451.
 Ἐλεγχῶ I. 615.
 Τὰ ἔλλα I. 265.
 Ἐν ἐπεραιοῖς II. 346.
 Ἐν ἔσμεν II. 526.
 Ἐννοια κοινὰ I. 5.
 Ἐπὶ I. 144.
 Ἐρευνᾶτε I. 252.
 Ἐσκήνωσιν II. 527. III. 622.
 Τὸν ἔτερον I. 128.
 Ἐυχέμενοι I. 252, 256.
 Ζωὴ II. 523.
 Ἡ δύναμις I. 54.
 Ἡλικία II. 639.
 Τὰ ἐφ' ἡμῖν what the } III. 352.
 Stoics meant by it }
 Ἡπίμασι I. 133.
 Θεοὶ III. 35.
 Θεὸς ὑπὸ μηχανῆς III. 312.
 Μίαν ἰδέαν I. 67.
 Ἰδιῶ I. 247.
 Ἰλασθεῖον I. 781.
 Ἰνα πληρωθῇ II. 277.
 Καίριος I. 119.
 Κακῶς πάχει III. 265.
 Τὸ εὖ καὶ καλῶς III. 81, 315.
 Καταργήσας I. 696.
 Καταργησῶ II. 304.
 Κατοικεῖ III. 622.
 Κήρυξ II. 291.
 Κοινωνία I. 174.
 Πολλὴ καὶ μάλλον κρείσσον I. 699.
 Τὴν πρώτην κλίσιν III. 703.
 Πιστὸς ὁ λόγος — πάσης } I. 440.
 ἀποδοχῆς αἰετῶ }
 Λυκαονιστὴς I. 56.
 Τὸ λύτερον II. 399.
 Μάγοι II. 661.
 Μεσοδείας τῆς πλάνης I. 24.
 Μελητῆς καὶ βραδύς I. 127.
 Μεσίτης I. 453.
 Μετὰ I. 137.
 Μετάβασις εἰς ἄλλο γένος II. 854.
 Μίαν μορφήν I. 67.
 Μυθικόν I. 169.
 Νῆς II. 148. III. 43.
 Νυχθήμερον I. 136. II. 518.
 Ομοιοπαθεῖς I. 56.
 Ομοιωθεῖς ἀνθρώποις I. 55.
 Ὅπως πληρωθῇ II. 277.
 Ὁφείδεται II. 122.

Παιδεία τῶ πατρὸς I. 26.
 Τὸ πᾶν II. 65.
 Παντοκράτωρ II. 498.
 Παρὰ τὴν κλίσιν I. 465.
 Παράψαι I. 177.
 Παρελογίζηται II. 854.
 Περὶ ἀμαρτίας I. 263.
 Πειρασμοὶ I. 794.
 Πειρασμοὶ ζήλων I. 683.
 Πλάνοι I. 97.
 Ἰνα πληρωθῇ II. 182.
 Πληρῶσαι I. 456, 473.
 Πνεῦμα ζωοποιῶν II. 545.
 Πνοὴ παντοκράτορος ἐστὶν ἡ } II. 661.
 διδασκαλία — }
 Ποιήματα II. 561.
 Ποιῆσαι II. 186.
 Πολυμερῶς I. 156, 164. III. 610.
 Πολυτρόπως I. 156, 164.
 Ἐκ τῆς πονηρίας III. 621.
 Πόνος III. 239.
 Πρόληψις III. 32.
 Καὶ αὐτὸς περὶ σοφίας } III. 649, 705.
 Ἐθνῶν — }
 Πρόσωπον II. 528.
 Σαββατισμός II. 175.
 Σημεῖα III. 118.
 Σκάνδαλον II. 632.
 Σκηνῶν ἐν ἡμῖν I. 771.
 Σκηνῶσαι III. 772.
 Σκαλοβάθριον I. 40.
 Σοφός II. 496.
 Σπριμολόγος I. 22.
 Σπογγή (what I. 46.) II. 638.
 Συζητητής II. 496.
 Συντέλεια } τῆς αἰῶνος I. 687.
 } τῶν αἰώνων I. 235.
 Σφραγίδες II. 728.
 Σφουροκόπος II. 660.
 Σῶμα λεπτόμερες I. 389.
 Τεταγμένοι εἰς ζωὴν } I. 438, 620.
 αἰώνιον — }
 Τινὲς δὲ ἄνδρες I. 55.
 Ἐν τοῖς τῶ πατρὸς με I. 485.
 Τρεπλὸς III. 302.
 Τροφοποιῶν I. 704.
 Ἡμῶν τύποι I. 687.
 Τύχη I. 44.
 Τλικὴ ἀνάγκη I. 430*.
 Τπειδὸν I. 57.
 Τρόπος I. 615.
 Φαρμακεία II. 189.
 Χάραγμα II. 728.
 Χάρις τῆς Θεοῦ III. 597.
 Ψηλαφήσαν I. 160.
 Ψυχὴ II. 241.
 Ψυχικός II. 847.
 Ωκοδομήθη I. 126. III. 703.



A N
I N D E X
O F

The PRINCIPAL MATTERS contained
in these *Three Volumes* of SERMONS.

- A** ARON, his Rod, III. 362.
 ABARIS, a Story of him, III. 138.
Abilities natural, mistakes in judging of their Strength, III. 598.
Aborigines — of Attica — Egypt, and Sicily, I. 13.
 ABRAHAM. The Promise of the Messiah made to Abraham and his Seed, did not vacate the Original Covenant with Mankind, III. 636. confin'd by some to Temporal Blessings, but without reason, III. 637.
 His Blessings of Isaac and Ishmael, how different, III. 637. which figur'd out the carnal and spiritual Seed, *Id. ibid.*
 — This farther enforc'd by an Allusion to the Name of Hagar, III. 638. The literal Promises to the Line of Isaac were figurative of spiritual Blessings, III. 638.
 Who his Sons, III. 640.
 The Father of the Faithful, III. 641.
 How the Promises belong'd to his Seed, *Id. ibid.*
 The Blessing given to Abraham why more particularly limited to Jacob than Esau, III. 644. — parted among the twelve Tribes, III. 645.
 Prophecies concerning his Posterity fulfill'd, — That they should be vastly multiplied above that of other Nations, II. 294. — That in his Seed all Nations should be blessed, II. 295. — That his Posterity should possess the Land of Canaan, II. 297. — That a Son should be born to him of barren Sarah, II. 298. — That his Posterity should sojourn in Egypt, II. 300.
 The Reason of his Calling, III. 528. — for the Preservation of true Religion, III. 528. — that all the World might be brought to the Knowledge of the Truth, III. 528.
 What Providences necessary upon the Calling of Abraham, III. 528.
 The History of him, III. 529.
 His Piety and Virtue, *Id. ibid.*
 Great Encouragement to be offer'd him, III. 529, 530.
 How he became a Nation, III. 529, 536. Some Account of their Religion and Government, III. 529, 540.
 Some Means for the Preservation of their Religion, and to bring the Knowledge of true Religion to other Nations, III. 529, 542. The Necessity that He and his Posterity should be well instructed in it, and that it be kept pure amongst them, III. 542. Some Means necessary to bring the Knowledge of it to others, III. 542.
 His offering his Son, a great Instance of Faith and Obedience, III. 530.
 Remarks upon the several Revelations to Abraham, III. 532.
 Something more meant by the Promise of Canaan, than barely the Land itself, III. 532.
 The Afflictions of Abraham's Posterity necessary to be foretold, III. 533. — and the Time when they should inherit the Land of Canaan, III. 534.
 Why God reveal'd the Destruction of Sodom to Abraham, III. 535. New Matter for Revelation drawn from hence, III. 536.
 VOL. III.
- Abstinence* unusual, II. 640.
Academics, their Method of examining Truths, III. 370.
Acceptance, no Method of it certain but by Revelation, III. 603.
Accidents, what, III. 413.
Acting. There must be a Power of acting, without being antecedently acted upon, II. 39.
Actions (human) the Principles of them, I. 283. Reason and Appetite, III. 352. Some good in their own Nature, I. 418. — their Freedom, I. 427. II. 247. III. 14.
 ADAM inspir'd, I. 159. — his Relation to Mankind, II. 415.
Adultery forbidden, I. 19.
Æquinoxes, the most windy Seasons, I. 82.
Affliction, the Support under it, I. 8. — How to judge of that of good Men, III. 270.
Aged Persons, II. 626.
Agent, Free, Motives proper to influence one, III. 247.
Agents, Inferior, have no creative or restorative Power, III. 361. — have no Power independent upon God, *Id. ib.*
 The two Wonders of the Egyptian Magicians, and that of Apollonius raising a Lady to Life, no Proof of this, III. 362.
Ages of Learning and Ignorance, II. 662.
Air, its Nature and Qualities, II. 345, 562.
 Its Laws, III. 189. — the natural Effects of its being subject to these Laws, III. 191.
 Gravitates towards the Earth, III. 190.
 Its Elasticity, *Id. ibid.*
 Necessary to vegetable Life, &c. II. 564.
 Its Quality of dissolving Bodies, II. 565.
 The particular Uses of this Element, III. 190. — its Use in enlightning the World, II. 565. — its Uses in the Functions of animal Bodies, II. 671.
 Objections relating to the Air consider'd, III. 188. — by a Fermentation of it — Storms and Earthquakes, III. 191.
 — Thunders and Lightnings, III. 192. — Plagues and Famines are occasion'd, III. 193. — their Uses, III. 193.
 Innate in the Ear, II. 607.
Air-Pump, Experiments in it, II. 562.
Air-Vessels, in Vegetables, II. 714.
Aloe Americana, II. 719.
Americans, III. 380.
Anatomy, comparative, II. 670, 680.
 ANAXIMANDER, a witty Conceit of his, I. 33.
Ancients. See *Fathers* of the Church.
 The Inventions of the Ancients, II. 664.
 Wherein the Honestum and Decorum of the Ancients consist, III. 243. The same mention'd in Scripture, III. 244.
Angels, what sort of Beings, III. 249.
 Their Power with regard to Miracles, III. 117.
Anger, in itself not sinful, I. 800.
Anima Mundi, III. 324, 325.
Animalcules of the Water, II. 631, 700. — their Number, II. 701. — a minute one, II. 712.
Animals, in general, II. 594.
 The curious Structure of Animals, III. 65. The Formation of the several Organs of their Sensation, III. 66.
 (9 S) Of

- Of their five Senses, II. 594. (Provision for all the Senses of them prove a God, III. 67.)
 Their Respiration, II. 616.
 Of the Place allotted them, II. 623.
 The Balance of their Numbers, II. 624. — particularly of Man, II. 625.
 Their Food, II. 628.
 Their Cloathing, II. 641.
 Their Habitations, II. 645.
 Their Self-Preservation, II. 650. — their Generation, &c. II. 652. III. 199.
 The different Motions of Animals, and the Causes of them, II. 620. The loco-motive Act itself, II. 622. — suited to the various Occasions of various Animals, II. 622. — the geometrical Performance of it, II. 623.
 Their Organs adapted to their Place, *Id. ibid.*
 Their curious Apparatus for the gathering, &c. of Food, II. 632. — their Mouth, *Id. ibid.* — their Teeth, II. 634. — their Glands, II. 634. — their Gullet, II. 635. — their Stomach, II. 635. — number of Ventracles, &c. in various Animals, II. 636. — their great Sagacity in finding out, &c. their Food, II. 637. (Provision made for the Preservation of such Animals, as are destitute of Food at some Seasons, II. 640.)
 Their Affection for their Young, II. 655. III. 638. — their Sagacity in Feeding their Young, II. 656. — their Courage in Defence of their Young, II. 655.
Annihilation, I. 6, 7. — Man's Aversion to it, II. 554.
Anthropomorphites, I. 3, 55.
Antipathy, II. 612.
Ants, II. 640. — their Provision against the Winter, and Care of their Young, II. 702. — their Generation, *Id. ib.*
APOLLONIUS of Tyana. See *Agents, Miracles, Resurrection*.
Apostles, (see *Disciples*) fit Judges whether Christ's Resurrection was real, III. 363. — their sometimes not knowing Him, no Proof of his not being the same Person, III. 364. Their Testimony concerning the Gospel Miracles not to be suspected, III. 384. because no worldly Purpose could be served by such a Testimony, III. 384. — They could not expect quick Conversions, — from the Nature of the Christian Religion, III. 386. — nor from the Dispositions of the Persons to be converted, III. 386. Nor could they intend to impose upon the World, III. 386. — considering, who they were that were to carry on the Cheat, III. 387. and the People to be cheated, who were Enemies to the Christian Religion, — and well able to distinguish fictitious from real Miracles, III. 388.
 The Desire of Glory not the Motive of their Preaching, III. 389. — they preached the Doctrines of the Gospel at the Time therein mention'd, III. 389.
 Their Predictions, I. 95.
 Commission'd by God, — and their Doctrine divine, I. 598.
 Why they had the greatest Evidence of Christianity, I. 606.
 The ill Treatment they met with, Matter of Joy to them, III. 487.
Apparitions a Proof of a God, II. 216.
Apprehensions worthy of God, what, I. 434. — worthy of Natural Religion, what, I. 434.
Arbitrary. God not arbitrary, II. 416. — God has no dispensing Power, II. 425. — God does not act by arbitrary Will, without Reason, III. 434. — God can act differently or contrarily, upon different and contrary Reasons, III. 438. but not contrary to the Nature of Things any farther than they are alter'd, III. 438. — the Rule of such Operations the Happiness of the World, III. 439.
ARCHYTAS, his Dove and Rattle, II. 664.
Areopagus, I. 12.
ARISTEAS, strange Stories of him, III. 138.
ARISTOTLE. See *Element*.
 — his Notion of the Eternity of the World, III. 81. — the Absurdity of it, II. 507.
 — his Account of the ancient Tradition of Religion, III. 42.
Ark of the Covenant to be abolished in the Days of the Messiah, III. 747. — greatly esteemed by the Jews, *Id. ib.*
Art, Works of, how distinguish'd from those of Necessity, III. 343, 346.
 Minute Works of it, II. 701. — Works of Nature and Art compar'd, II. 575, 641, 700. III. 63.
Arteries, II. 673. — Carotid, II. 681. — Vertebral, II. 681.
Arteria Aspera, II. 690.
Ascent of Liquors, whence, II. 580.
Affent, clear and distinct Ideas not the sole Cause of it, III. 368.
Affiance, Supernatural, — and the Measure of it, III. 464. — the Advantages of depending upon God for it, II. 411.
Atheism, (see *God*) — when it began, III. 107.
 Its Causes, I. 339. — the Fear of an After-reckoning, I. 341. Pride, I. 347, 360. and Vanity of appearing greater and wiser than others, I. 347. — Prejudice and Prepossession, I. 340. — Immorality, I. 356. II. 3. — Willfulness, I. 365. — Ignorance and false Philosophy, II. 3. and partial thinking, III. 291.
 A Scheme of it, III. 299. The Difficulties and Absurdities of it, II. 323. III. 299. — not exempt from Enthusiasm, II. 482.
 Its Folly, I. 3, 4, &c. 336.
 The Reason why it prevails, I. 5. Plato's Reason why, I. 9. — prevails most in Countries of Restraint, II. 822.
 Consider'd as a Vice, I. 351. Its Principles mischievous to Society, II. 501. Of mighty Importance to Government to put a Stop to the Growth of it, I. 10. Not tolerable in the most private Condition, much less in public Authority, I. 10.
 Appears in several Disguises — in giving the Name of God to Matter, III. 595. — in the Epicurean Notion of unactive Deities, III. 595. — and in modern Deism, III. 596.
 Difference between Atheism and Deism, I. 350. III. 88.
 No such thing as foolish Credulity by the Principles of it, II. 456. — nor Error, II. 456.
 Confuted, III. 394. — from the Faculties of the Soul, I. 12. — from the Structure and Origin of human Bodies, I. 22. — from the Origin and Frame of the World, I. 52.
Atheist, (see *DEMOCRITUS, EPICURUS, SPINOZA*) who, II. 458. what, I. 350. — his general Character and Qualification, I. 357. — whether any Atheists, II. 202. Two sorts of them, II. 202. — whether any speculative Atheist, I. 365. — the Difficulty of being an Atheist, II. 445.
 Their Infatuation, I. 4. — Hopes, I. 7, 8. — sad Constitution of Government, I. 10. — their Amity, upon what founded, I. 11.
 How to be reclaim'd, I. 18.
 Their Credulity, I. 21. II. 458. — more credulous than Christians, II. 484. What Evidence sufficient to vindicate him from a foolish Credulity, II. 458. — his Faith and Practice, I. 325. — can't free his Mind from the Fears of a future State, III. 284. — has not so much the Advantage of the religious Man, as they are apt to boast, with respect to the Pleasures of the Body, II. 453. — has no Reason to make Profelytes, III. 285. — or to impose their Notions on others, II. 805. — ought not to urge any Objection, whose Strength rises from our Incapacity, III. 293. — their unfair Dealings, III. 335. — the Reasons why they quit Religion ill-grounded, III. 339. — unreasonable in complaining of Difficulties in religious Belief, III. 343. — their Scoffing at Religion unjustifiable, II. 253, 433. — their Plea for not enquiring into the Merits of Revelation, answer'd, III. 357.
 Their way of Writing unfair, II. 253. — destructive of Morality, II. 253. — and of Society, II. 254.
 Common Enemies of Mankind, II. 438, 439. — not exempted from Submission to public Establishments, II. 806. — the Interest of Government not to suffer them, II. 438, &c.
 Unreasonable, II. 501. — Unhappy, II. 445, 501. III. 17.
Atheistical Hypotheses, I. 3, 4, 24, 45, 46, 58, 63. — of forming the World of the Chaos, I. 68. — Material, III. 300, &c. — of the Origin of the World, II. 226, 228, 229, 472. III. 342.
 — Principles, III. 79. — the Absurdity of them, III. 79, 80.
 — Tenets, I. 1, 15, 18, 43. III. 282, 285, 288, 291, 332.
Athenians, their Character, I. 55.
Athens, its Religion, I. 13.
Atmosphere, I. 38. — its Nature and Use, II. 562. — with respect to Respiration, I. 83. — to the Winds, II. 566. — and the Clouds and Rain, II. 568. — of the Moon, I. 82.
Atoms, not the Cause of Vision and Thought, I. 3, 18, 20. Their fortuitous Concourse not the Origin of the World, I. 12. II. 507. — this shown from the Notion of Fortune and Chance, &c. I. 63.
 The Doctrine of Atoms ridicul'd, I. 21. — allowing them reciprocal Attraction, they could not so convene as to form the present System, I. 72.
Atonement. See *Death*, and *Expiation*.
 Mischiefs arising from mistaken Notions of it, II. 371.
 The

The Nature of it explain'd, II. 372.
 Its Necessity proceeds from the Necessity of Punishment, II. 372.
 The End of it the Honour of God, II. 373. — what necessary to answer that End, II. 375. — the Punishment of Sin, II. 375. — the Death of the Expiator, *Id. ibid.* — the Insufficiency of the Blood of Beasts to atone for Sin, II. 376. This Notion confirm'd by its Usefulness to solve the Objections brought against it, II. 377. — not inconsistent with God's free Grace in pardoning Sin, II. 378. — Legal Atonement did not reach to all Cases, III. 757. — whether Sacrifices on the great Day of Expiation, were design'd to atone for Sins in general, III. 757. — their Atonements at the best but figurative, III. 758. — for *Sin*, the unnatural Methods of it in the Pagan World, I. 462. — whence they had their Origin, I. 462.
Attestation, Divine, what, I. 183.
Attraction. See *Gravitation, Gravity, Nature*. — what, I. 70. — not essential to Matter, I. 70.
 The Cause of the proportional Descent of Bodies, II. 572. — of the Earth's Sphericity, II. 576. — of the Ascent of Liquors, II. 580.
Attributes. See *God, Perfections*. — Divine Attributes, how known, I. 408. — two ways of finding them out, III. 412. Their Harmony set forth in our Redemption, II. 419. Moral Attributes of God. See *Liberty*.
Auditory Passage, II. 607. — Nerves, II. 609.
Authority, a good Reason for giving our Assent to a Proposition, III. 367. — the best way of teaching the World, III. 369. (See *Teaching*) — a good Rule for interpreting Scripture, III. 607. especially when enforc'd by Miracles, III. 608.
 Human Authority, how far we ought to be determin'd in our Belief by it, II. 831. — of the Philosophers, weaken'd by their Divisions, III. 370. — of others, the same as that of private Reason in Matters of Religion, III. 604. Divine Authority, what, I. 197. The Evidence of a Divine Authority accompanied the first Preachers of the Gospel, III. 485. — of God, the only sufficient Rule of Life, III. 475.
Automaton, I. 44.
Axioms of Reason, I. 5. III. 296, 304.

B.
 BABYLAS, St. — the Story of the Removal of his Bones, III. 675.
Back-bone, II. 621, 667.
 BACON, Ld. how abus'd by Freethinkers, II. 786.
Bajaco, II. 720.
Balls on Vegetables, II. 648, 708.
Bat, II. 564. — his Wings, II. 679.
 BAYLE. See *Chaos*. — his Hypothesis of Free Agents, III. 324.
Beasts (except the As) lousy, II. 704.
Bees, II. 648, 656, 702. — their Sting, II. 650. — wild Bees, II. 699.
Beetles, *Id. ibid.*
Being. The utmost Perfections of Being, I. 409. There must have existed from Eternity one Independent Being, II. 7. This Being must necessarily exist, II. 8. The Certainty of the Existence of a supreme independent Cause, II. 10. — material World not the self-existent Being, II. 12, 28. The Essence of the self-existent Being incomprehensible, II. 18. The self-existent Being must be Eternal, II. 19. — must be Infinite and Omnipresent, II. 20. — Simple and Unchangeable, II. 21. — can be but One, II. 22. — the Absurdity of more than One, III. 309. — must be Intelligent, II. 23. — not easily prov'd *a priori*, II. 24. — but demonstrably *a posteriori*, — from the Degrees of Perfection in Things, and the Order of Causes and Effects, II. 24. — from the Intelligence that is in Created Beings, II. 24. — from the Beauty, Order, and Final Causes of Things, II. 26. — from the Original of Motion, II. 27. Must be a Free Agent, II. 28. — prov'd from his Intelligence, II. 28. — from the arbitrary Disposition of Things, II. 29. — from final Causes, II. 31. — from the Finiteness of created Beings, II. 31. — from the Impossibility of an infinite Succession of Causes, II. 31. Must be All-powerful, II. 33. Must be infinitely Wise, II. 47. — prov'd *a priori*, II. 47. — and *a posteriori*, from the Perfection of the Works of God, II. 48. Must be infinitely Good, Just and True, II. 50.

The Notion of a Self-existent Being, III. 406. There must be some Self-existent Being, III. 407. This the same with an Independent, Eternal, Necessary, Immaterial, Omnipresent Being, III. 407. Self-existent Being Immaterial, III. 410. See *Immaterial*; see also *God*. Intelligent Beings, their Existence, without a God, impossible, I. 299. Two necessary Independent Beings impossible, III. 167. — the Idea of two such Principles contradictory to each other, III. 168.
Belief, human Actions depend upon it, III. 26. — much more Moral, III. 27. — of a God, owing to Mens Ignorance of the Powers of Matter and Motion, according to the Epicurean Atheist, III. 288. Men, tho' not Atheists, may live long without it, II. 822. — General of a God, its Foundation, III. 51. — his Works, III. 52. May proceed, 1st, From common original Instruction, convey'd down from the Beginning, II. 52, 53. (This prov'd by several Arguments, III. 53. and several Usages of a civil Nature, III. 56.) 2dly, From the natural Frame of Man's Mind, disposing him clearly to apprehend the Truth of it upon the first proposing, III. 56. Two Objections against this answer'd — First, That there are some Nations without any Notion of God, III. 57. Secondly, The great Wickedness of Men, II. 58. 3dly, From the visible Effects of God's Power, Wisdom and Goodness, III. 60. A mere Belief of a God, without a Providence, no Ground of Belief, III. 23. — Religious, its Difficulties. See *Atheist*.
Benevolence, according to the Epicureans, none in God, or Man, III. 283. — mutual, I. 429. — universal, mutual, what, II. 91.
Birch-Tree, II. 720.
Birds, a Survey of them, II. 687. The Make of their Body, II. 687. — their Cloathing, of Feathers, II. 687, 688. — the Position of their Feathers, II. 687. — their Wings, II. 644, 687. — their Tail, II. 689. — their Legs and Feet, II. 689. — their Head, II. 690. — their Larynx, II. 690. — their Tongue, II. 690. — their Ears, II. 608. — their inner Ear, II. 690. — their Bills, II. 633, 691. — their Stomach, and its Uses, II. 691. — their Lungs, II. 691. — their Breast, II. 691. — their Neck and Legs, II. 623, 691. — their Motion, II. 622, 687. Parts administering thereto, II. 687. — their Buoyancy, II. 564, 644, 692. — their Oil-Bag, II. 687. — their State. First, Their Migration, II. 692. — wonderful in knowing the Time of their Flight, II. 692. — and the Way to go, II. 693. — their Accommodations for it, II. 693. Secondly, Their Incubation, II. 694. Thirdly, Their Nidification, II. 646, &c. 695. Lousy, II. 704. — of Passage, II. 692. — Rapacious, II. 689. The wonderful Instinct of one, II. 647.
Births and Burials, their Proportion, I. 27. II. 626, 627. — of Males and Females, near equal, I. 479.
Blood, II. 636. — its Contrivance, II. 673, 684. The Difficulty of accounting for the Circulation of it, II. 211. — its Circulation in the Fœtus in the Womb, II. 619. — its Circulation not the original Cause of Thought, II. 239. The eating of it, why forbidden by the Law, I. 779. III. 206, 524.
Body. See *Man, Resurrection*. — of Man, its natural and moral Perfection, III. 423. — the Passions of Men arising from the Body, III. 237. Its Immortality surprising, II. 550. — difficult to be conceiv'd, II. 550. Its Resurrection scoff'd at by Infidels, II. 558. — not impossible, II. 558. The human Body a Proof of God, II. 500. — its Structure the Workmanship of God, I. 24, 25, 46, &c. — well fitted for Life, Motion, and Sensation, I. 24. — Atheistical Account of it, I. 24. — its Distempers a Complaint of Atheists, I. 25. — but accounted for by Religion, I. 26. — God would not have permitted its Corruption, had Man used his Liberty aright in his State of Trial, I. 444.
Bodys

- Bodys*, Heavenly, the Position of them in the best manner, III. 424. — their Heat and Influence proportion'd in the best manner, II. 425.
 — *not Elastic*, their Motion how lost, III. 319.
Bobages, II. 640.
Bonafus, II. 651.
Bones, their Structure, &c. II. 621, 667, 670.
Book. How Men may be assur'd, that a Book was written by the Person whose Name it bears, I. 533. — and that the Author did not design to impose upon his Readers, I. 534. — from the Matter of his Report being credible in itself, I. 534. — from the Credit of the Author, I. 535. — from the Author's giving the best Proofs of his Veracity in this particular, I. 535.
 Reasons for doubting of the Authority of any Book, II. 748.
Books of the New Testament. See *Testament*.
 BOYLE, Hon. Mr. the Design of his Lectures. Dr. Bentley's Dedication, I. 429, 458, 468. II. 562. III. 215.
 His Reverence for the Name of God, II. 502.
Brain. See *Perception*. — of Man and Quadrupeds, II. 680.
 The Difference of the Brain of Man and Beasts, II. 690.
 Worms in the Brain, II. 705.
Bread, the making of it discover'd by Revelation, II. 631.
Breasts, II. 656.
Breath short on high Mountains, II. 563.
Breezes, Sea, and Land, II. 567.
Brethren, who, in the Scripture Sense, I. 132, 142.
Brow, II. 675.
Brutes, Automata, or mere Machines (a Cartesian Principle I. 19.) II. 684. III. 332. — how they act, III. 415. — outdo Man in some things, II. 592, 594.
 Whether their Souls are Immortal, II. 243. — what becomes of their Immaterial Principle when they die, III. 426.
- C.
- Cadews* (Phryganea) II. 648.
 Cadew-Fly, II. 699. Cadew-Worm, II. 707.
 CAIN, his murdering Abel consider'd, III. 22, 522. — what necessary in this Case, III. 522.
Calamities, Denunciations of them often conditional, I. 96.
Camel, II. 651. — his Stomach, II. 682.
Cameleon, his Eyes, II. 597, 651.
Canon of the Old Testament, I. 662.
 The Variety of the Canons of Scripture no Objection to Christianity, II. 755.
Capacity, ours suited to our State and Concerns, II. 792.
 The Difference of Mens intellectual Capacities, whence, II. 821.
Cardamine, II. 717.
Carps, how fattened, II. 563.
Cartesians, their Principle, to doubt of every thing, false, III. 405. — their Tenets, I. 19. — an Error of theirs, II. 10.
Cases for Insects, on Willows and other Vegetables, II. 707.
Cassida Plant, II. 583.
Castor, II. 635. — his Feet, II. 679, 680.
Caterpillars, II. 651, 707. — their Motion, II. 710.
Caves, Bellowing, II. 610. — Medicinal, in Italy, II. 711.
 — *Les Caves Goutieres*, &c. II. 585.
Cause. Every Cause proportion'd to its Effect, and *vice versa*, III. 426.
 All not Mechanical, III. 323.
 — *Supreme*. See *Being*, GOD.
Causes, *Secondary*, those that maintain the System of the Sun and Planets, I. 73.
 — *Final*, III. 195. — why banish'd out of Philosophy by the Epicureans, II. 212. — the Absurdity of rejecting them, III. 79.
Celandine, II. 719.
Certainty, what, I. 292. — three sorts, Physical, Mathematical, and Moral (Evidence) II. 513.
 — *Religious*, what, *Id. ibid.*
Chance, what meant by it, I. 42, 43, 64, &c. — nothing, I. 302. II. 722. III. 346. — how distinguish'd from Fortune, I. 44, 64.
 The World not made by it, II. 226, 473, 570, 677, 722.
 See *World*.
 A famous Example of it, out of Plutarch, I. 44.
Chaos, how to form a Notion of it, I. 66, 67, &c. — its Matter could not by common Motion convene into such Masses, as the Planets now are, I. 68.
 Ovid's Account of it consistent, notwithstanding Mr. Bayle's Charge, III. 318.
- Charity*, Christian, II. 447.
Chickens, II. 639, 694.
Children, naturally innocent, II. 845.
Chinese, their Philosophy, III. 324. — their Ignorance of the supreme Being, III. 380. — Bad Astronomers, II. 665.
 CHRIST. See *Death*, GOD, *Law Moral*, MESSIAH, *Miracle*, *Mediator*, *Prophecy*, *Satisfaction*, *Saviour*, *Sufferings*.
 — the Gospel Account of Him, II. 512.
 His Pedigree from David acknowledg'd necessary by the Jews, III. 626. — therefore recorded by the Evangelists, III. 627. — the Difficulties in St. Matthew's and St. Luke's Account of it consider'd, III. 627. — Julius Africanus's Scheme of solving them, III. 628. — Another Scheme for solving them, III. 632.
 His Life, III. 489.
 Whatever Certainty the Jews have for the Actions, &c. of Moses, the Christian has more for the Actions, &c. of *Christ*, I. 652.
 Compar'd with Moses, III. 655. — as a Lawgiver, is oppos'd to Moses, III. 656. — the Difference of their Ministry, III. 727.
 Why *Christ* is called by the Name of David, III. 663. — and a Rod out of the Stem of Jesse, III. 664.
 His Conversation, I. 464.
 His Doctrine, either regarded what before was taught by the Light of Nature, or what was necessary upon the Account of the Apostasy of Man, I. 466. — does perfectly agree with that of right Reason, I. 466. — what it teacheth Man concerning God, I. 467. — more of Him than Natural Religion, I. 468.
 His Doctrine, what, I. 466. — concerning Almighty God, I. 467. — concerning our selves, I. 471. — concerning our Duty, I. 472. — with respect to God, I. 473. — to our Neighbour, I. 475. — to our selves, I. 476.
 He advanc'd the Moral Law, I. 672. — abolish'd Death, I. 694. — brought Life and Immortality to light, I. 700.
 The Jewish Prejudices against Him, I. 105. His Power to confer prime Dignities, I. 133. Christian Notion of his Manhood, I. 134. To be a Nazarene, I. 139.
 His Relation to Mankind, II. 415.
 His Sufferings previous to his Kingdom, III. 691. — the Design of them, I. 457. — an Offering and full Expiation for the Sins of Men, I. 457, 464. — their Merit, II. 535.
 His Death our Atonement, II. 397. — by being a Punishment for our Sins, II. 398. — how a Ransom and a Sacrifice, II. 398. — by the Severity of his Sufferings, II. 399. — by the Dignity of his Person, II. 400. — for us, the greatest Evidence of God's Love, II. 421. — a Sacrifice for Sin, I. 777. — an Expiation for Sin, III. 490.
Christ, tho' innocent, might be so a Sacrifice as to bear the Punishment of Sin, I. 792. — because he consented to suffer, I. 795. — and had a Right so to dispose of Himself, I. 796. — and because the Ends of Punishment were answer'd by it, I. 796.
 The Mystery of his Death, III. 491.
 His lying in the Grave, reconcil'd with the Antitype of the Prophet Jonas, II. 518.
 His Ascension into Heaven on the Evening of that very Day on which He rose from the Dead, II. 343.
 His Intercession, what, III. 485.
 His Kingdom; the Amplitude and Extent of it, III. 669.
 The Predictions in the Psalms could not be fulfilled in the Times of David and Solomon, III. 670. — particularly the Conquests of Enemies, and Conversion of them to the true Religion, III. 670. — which is more fully confirm'd by Isaiah, III. 671. — and shewn to be effected under the Son of David, III. 671. The People thus converted reckon'd an Accession to the Jews, and call'd by the Name of Israel, III. 672. An Objection, that it was not actually extended agreeably to these Predictions, answer'd, III. 674.
 The Peace and Tranquillity of *Christ's* Kingdom, III. 677.
 The want of such Peace, has been a Pretence to harden the Jews in Infidelity, III. 778. Mistakes concerning — the Nature of that Peace which *Christ* was to give, III. 679. — the Persons on whom He was to bestow it, III. 681. — and the Time from which it should commence, III. 682. This Peace to be introduc'd by great Commotions, and not to give place to any other Dispensation, III. 706. These Commotions fell out accordingly, III. 706.
 The

The perpetual Duration of Christ's Kingdom, III. 684.
 This promis'd, but not fulfill'd in David or Solomon, III. 684. This Everlasting Kingdom promis'd to one Person, III. 685. — foretold by David, III. 686. The Phrases of [sitting at God's right Hand] and [making his Enemies his Footstool] explained by the Apostle to this Purpose, III. 686.
 Two Objections against the perpetual Duration of Christ's Kingdom, solv'd, III. 687, 688.
 Christ's reigning a thousand Years not inconsistent with it, I. 689.
 Christ's Divinity, II. 522. — (the Efficacy of it, I. 716.) — prov'd by his Resurrection, II. 402. — out of Scripture, by his Attributes, I. 762, 765. II. 524. — from the Doctrine of the Catholick Church, II. 528.
 No other Notion of Him clears the Justice and Honour of God, in the Pardon of Sin, II. 532. — nor answers the principal Ends of his Messiahship, II. 536.
 His Eternity, Omnipresence, and Self-Existence, II. 522.
 The Judge of Quick and Dead, III. 493.
 Christianity. See *Apostles, Doctrine, Religion*.
 Its Original, I. 430. — Prejudices against the Doctrine of it, III. 144. — Objections to the Hardships of its Precepts, I. 477. — New Doctrine superadded to Natural Religion, no Objection against Christianity, I. 467.
 A divine Revelation, III. 481. — Principles of it, I. 238. — How affected by religious Disputes, II. 774. — and by modern Systems of Divinity, II. 775.
 Its Fundamentals plain, II. 817. Why the Proofs of it do not amount to a Demonstration, II. 864. The Truth of it as convincing to us, as to those who liv'd in the Apostles Times, I. 607.
 Not a novel Invention, III. 782.
 The Service done it by being establish'd, — *First*, By Persecutions, I. 823. — *First*, The firm Belief of its Doctrine, I. 824. — *Secondly*, The Union of its Professors, I. 826. — *Thirdly*, The Power of its Influence on their Lives and Actions, I. 827.
Secondly, By the mean Condition and Endowments of the first Propagators of it, I. 828.
 Its Advantages, II. 415. — most promotes Holiness and Virtue, II. 423. — especially by the Doctrine of our Redemption, II. 423.
 Has provided for the Happiness of Man, III. 482. — and instructed us in the true Nature, III. 482. and Worship — of God, III. 483.
 The Practice of it the Refutation of Atheism, II. 557.
 Christians. See *Jews*. — Tacitus's Account of the Original of that Sect, III. 389.
 Have differ'd in expounding the Books of the Old Testament, I. 728. Treat the Things revealed different from Infidels, II. 558.
 The Christian's Life most excellent, honourable, and agreeable to the best Reason, II. 436. — He hath taken a Course the most safe in the End, II. 437. — his Duty to be the best of Men, II. 561. Their Immoralities no Objection to Christianity, III. 605.
 The Hope of Christians and Atheists different, II. 555.
 Were warn'd to expect Divisions and Persecutions, III. 679.
 Chronology, Sacred, I. 190.
 CHRYSOSTOM, his Preaching, how admir'd, II. 511.
 Church and State, different, II. 546.
 — *Christian*, the Hebrew a Type of it, III. 638.
 The twelve Tribes, and their Bondage in Egypt and Deliverance thence, a Type of it, III. 644.
 Its State foretold, III. 141.
 — *Gentile*, why it succeeded the Jewish, III. 639.
 Chyle, II. 636.
 Cicatricula, II. 694.
 CICERO, how abus'd by Freethinkers, II. 785.
 Circle, its Quadrature, II. 660.
 Circulation of the Fluids, in human Bodies, II. 671.
 — of the Blood. See *Blood*.
 Circumcision, by whom used, I. 170. — the Use of it, I. 681. — the spiritual Meaning of it, III. 740. — a Token of God's Covenant with Abraham, III. 531. — the Reason of it, and the Wisdom of God in the Appointment of it, III. 535.
 Claspers, II. 719.
 Climate disposes People to Infirmary, I. 54.
 All things suited to their different Climates, III. 424.
 Cloathing of Animals, suited to their Place of Abode and

Occasions, II. 641.
 — of Irrationals, II. 643. — the Beauty thereof, II. 645.
 — of Man, II. 642.
 Clocks, their Variation under the Æquinoctial, II. 576.
 Clockwork, its Invention, II. 664.
 Clouds, their Origin, II. 568, 589.
 — their Usefulness, II. 568, 579.
 Cohen, its Signification, III. 749.
 Cohesion, what, III. 184. — Particles of Matter are united by it, III. 184.
 Cold, the grand Agent in the Formation of Meteors, II. 568. — the Effects of it, II. 569. — how provided against in Northern Regions, II. 642.
 Colours, distinguish'd by Feeling, II. 615. — changing in Gems, II. 676.
 Comets, their Use, III. 178.
 Commandments, what agreeable to the Reason of Mankind, I. 9. The Preface to the Ten Commandments differently explain'd, III. 544. The fourth, fifth, and sixth Commandments, III. 724.
 Commentators, some Christian, more absurd than the Jews, II. 276. A Mistake of theirs in the Interpretation of Prophecies, II. 277.
 Comprehensions, the least Works of Creation and Providence infinitely exceed ours, I. 451.
 Cones, II. 596, 647, 681.
 Conscience, what, I. 168, 420. — its Forebodings not to be wholly extinguish'd, I. 7. II. 214.
 — *Natural*, a Proof of the Being of a God, II. 214.
 Consciousness. See *Guilt*.
 Doth not proceed from Matter, III. 336. — nor from the peculiar Organization of human Bodies, III. 337.
 Consent. See *God*. The Argument taken from general Consent explain'd, II. 460.
 — *Universal*, why an Argument for Truth, III. 427. — the Strength of this Proof for the Truth of any thing, I. 288. — for the Being of a God, II. 206. Whether that of Mankind in the Belief of a God be universal, II. 205. III. 31, 57. The Atheists Objections to it answer'd, II. 207, 461. That there hath been no such general Consent, answer'd, II. 461. That there have been always Atheists, replied to, II. 462. The Objections to the general Consent, answer'd — from the Wickedness of Mens Lives, II. 464. — from the Impossibility of having any Notion of God, II. 465. — retorted upon Atheists, II. 465. That this general Consent arises from other Causes, than the Reasonableness of the Subject of this Consent, answer'd, II. 466. This universal Consent arises not from Tradition, II. 466. — nor from Fear, II. 468. III. 281. — nor from Mens Ignorance of the Power of Matter to form itself into a World without a God, II. 470. — nor from human Art, III. 40. — nor from the Invention of Legislators, or some subtle Politician, II. 473. III. 281. — nor from Ill-humour, or the Defect of Goodness in Mankind, II. 475. The Foundation of this universal Consent, III. 51.
 Contact, Mutual, Matter cannot operate on Matter without it, I. 71. One Body may act upon another without it, III. 291, 292, 324.
 Contradictions, what, and why God cannot do them, III. 419.
 Controversy, some Matters of it in Scripture, I. 248. What to be done in those Cases, I. 248. How they affect Religion, II. 774.
 Conversation, ours how to be regulated, III. 448.
 Corruption of one Mode, the Generation of another, III. 340.
 Cortex Peruvianus, II. 719.
 Covenant. God's original Covenant with Mankind, II. 356. — prov'd from the Authority of Scripture, *Id. ibid.* — and the Reasonableness of such a Covenant, II. 358. This prov'd from the Difference of Good and Evil, *Id. ib.* — from God's acting according to this Difference, *Id. ib.* — from the advantageous Condition of Mankind, in our original State, II. 359. — from the Necessity of a perfect Obedience, II. 360.
 A Covenant made with our first Parents of Faith and Obedience, III. 517, 519.
 The Advantages of being under Covenant with God, II. 405.
 — *The New Covenant*, I. 457. — the Necessity of it, II. 406. — its Conditions; Faith, II. 407. — Repentance, II. 408. — its Promises and Advantages; Divine Grace, II. 410. — Future Happiness in Heaven, II. 411.

- A New Covenant to be given by the Messiah, III. 754.
 The New Testament, why a better Covenant than the Old, III. 641. All Jacob's Sons within the Covenant with Abraham, III. 644.
Countenance, whence its Variation, II. 675.
Cranes, II. 639, 692.
Creation. See *World*. — what meant by it, III. 421.
 Creation of Matter out of Nothing, possible, I. 60.
 III. 297. — probable, I. 61.
 Atheists Objection against the Possibility of Creation, considered, II. 230.
 The Objections against the Excellency of its present State, answer'd, III. 186.
 Its Magnitude and Extent a Proof of the Power of God, III. 62.
 — of the *World*, the Consequences of considering it as the Effect of the Power, III. 421. — of the Knowledge, III. 423. — of the Wisdom, III. 423. — of the Truth, III. 425. — and of the Goodness of God, III. 427.
 Moses's Account of it agreeable to Reason, III. 430.
Creator. Atheists Objections against God's being the Creator of the World, answer'd, II. 230.
Creatures. Their Number and Variety, III. 62. — their Minuteness, III. 63. The Beauty and Regularity of every distinct Species of them, III. 63. — and their curious Structure, Proofs of the Being of a God, III. 65.
 Every one made perfect in its kind, III. 423.
 All endued with proper Powers and Dispositions, suited to their Ends, III. 424.
 No living, sensible, and rational Creature produc'd by mere Matter and Motion, III. 426. — Every Creature is actuated by an Immaterial Principle, III. 426. Every one made for its Happiness, III. 427. — which is to be attain'd by acting according to its Nature, III. 427.
 Those incapable of Happiness themselves, made for that of others, III. 428.
 Those necessary for the Happiness of Man, made for that End, III. 71, 428. — All things order'd for their Happiness, III. 433.
 — *Animal*, their State with respect to each other, with the Objections against it, III. 204. Cruelty towards them unjust, III. 205. The Flesh of some good for Food, III. 205. Made originally subject to Death, III. 206. — have no Notion of Death, III. 207. — their State better for being Food for Men, III. 207. — their State better than that of many other Creatures, III. 208.
 By Animals living one upon another, there is more Good upon the Whole, III. 208. The permitting such Creatures to increase, would be of very ill Consequence, III. 209.
 — *noxious*, their Use and Service, II. 582, 592, 711, 714.
 III. 194. — Remedies against them, II. 582. — produce the fewest Young, II. 624, 655.
Credibility of Things, how mistaken, I. 189.
Credulity. See *Atheists*. — culpable, III. 127.
Crickets, II. 699.
Crocodiles, II. 624, 650, 651.
Cross-Bill, II. 633.
Crow, II. 655.
Cuntur of Peru, II. 625.
Customs, General, III. 56.

D.

Demons, III. 44. See *Wonders*. — The Distinction between them and Gods, I. 452. — A sort of Mediators, I. 452.
Damnation (see *Fear*) to the Wicked not unrighteous, II. 413. — altho' eternal, II. 413.
Damned. See *Punishment Eternal*.
Dandalion, II. 716.
DANIEL, his Prophecies concerning Christ genuine, II. 761.
 — his Wisdom ascrib'd to God, II. 661, 662.
DAVID a Type of Christ, III. 662. The Messiah to arise from his Seed, II. 333.
Day, Natural, what, II. 518.
 — and *Night*, the Use of their Vicissitude, II. 578.
Days of the Week, II. 728.
 — *last*, what meant by them, II. 311, 324.
Deaf Person cured by a Fever, II. 674.
Death, whence it is that Man and other Animals are subject to it, III. 200. The Circumstances of it aggravate the Evil of it, III. 207.
 — *Violent*, an Epicurean and Stoical Principle, I. 8.
 The Portion of the Unredeemed, II. 389. — abolish'd by Christ, I. 694.
 Two Objections of the Jews against this, answer'd, I. 695.
 — *Spiritual*, remov'd by virtue of a Bodily Death, *Id. ib.*
 How present Bodily Death is reconcileable with this, I. 696.
Death-Watch, II. 583.
Deer, their Legs, II. 679. — Worms in them, II. 705.
Degree, its Measure, II. 577.
Deism, what, III. 596. No consistent Scheme of it now in the World, II. 77.
Deist (see *Atheism*) I. 2, 350, 429. A Deist, what, I. 351.
 Several sorts of them, II. 71. — the first sort deny Providence, II. 72. — the second sort profane and debauch'd, not capable of being argued with, II. 74. — the third sort deny the Immortality of human Souls, II. 75. — the fourth sort believe nothing but the Religion of Nature, II. 76.
 His chief Principles no just Foundation of Hope, II. 420.
 — don't promote Holiness and Virtue, II. 423.
 His Faith and Practice, I. 326.
 A Confutation of their Principles, tho' not a Conviction of themselves, of use to others, III. 596.
Deity to be honour'd, a general Notion, III. 284.
 The Pagans monstrous Opinion of Him, I. 465.
Deluge. See *Shells*. — Atheistical Account of it refuted, I. 28. The Prophecy concerning it fulfilled, II. 290.
 The Necessity of an universal Deluge shewn, III. 523.
 — various Means of Reformation tried before it, *Id. ib.*
 Several Revelations necessary at and after it, III. 523.
 The Credibility of Moses's History in this Case, III. 524.
DEMOCRITUS, his Notion of a Deity, I. 3. — of the Gods, III. 314. — of the Origin of the World from a casual hit of Atoms. See *Atoms*. II. 507.
Demoniacs, whether there be any, II. 217. — a Proof of the Being of a God, II. 218.
Dependence upon God, the Neglect of it the Occasion of Sin, I. 447.
DES CARTES, his ludicrous Notion of the Earth's Rest, I. 3. His Account of the Production of human Body, I. 36. — renounc'd Final Causes, II. 508. — ascrib'd undue Power to Matter in Motion, II. 508. — not an Atheist, II. 662.
Descent of heavy Bodies, II. 572.
Desire of all Nations, what meant by that Phrase, III. 705.
Desires, (Natural) and Fears, have, and are suited to their respective Objects, III. 427.
Devil. See *Serpent*. — his Power, III. 226, 264. — of his Possession, III. 265. A Restraint laid upon him, on the Arrival of Christians in the dark Parts of the World, III. 676. His Delusions brought into the Church, are in due time to be remov'd, III. 676.
Dialects different, II. 676.
Diamonds grow, II. 586.
Diastole. Respiration the cause of the Diastole of the Heart, II. 616.
DICÆARCHUS, his Notion of the Soul, III. 340.
Difference in the Appearance of Things, I. 284.
Differences of Things, eternal and necessary, II. 79. — the Absurdity of denying this, II. 80. An Objection from the Variety of Opinions of learned Men, and Laws of different Nations concerning Right and Wrong, answer'd, II. 82.
 — *Moral* of Things, not allow'd by Unbelievers, III. 284, 349, 350. — that there are such, prov'd — First, From the different Circumstances of the Actions of Intelligent Beings, III. 350. — Secondly, From the Ethical, III. 352. and Political Schemes of Philosophers and Legislators, founded upon the Supposition of Moral Differences, III. 353. — Thirdly, From a Difference in some Cases, allow'd of even by those who refer all to Pleasure and Profit, III. 354.
 They appear to God the same as to us, III. 355.
 God's not Punishing the Bad, and Rewarding the Good, in this Life, no Proof that there are no Moral Differences, III. 355.
Digestion, II. 632.
Discharges, Unusual, of Nature, II. 673.
Disciples. See *Apostles*. — the Testimony of Christ's, a Proof of the Christian Revelation, II. 189. — what Things requisite to make it so, II. 189. They could not be impos'd upon themselves, II. 189. — nor could they have any Design of imposing upon others, II. 190. Their Testi-

Testimony is truly convey'd down to us, II. 191.
Diseases, an Account of Man's, I. 26. — sometimes useful, II. 674. Why Animals are subject to them, III. 201.
Dittany, II. 719.
Divers, II. 611.
Divination, I. 223.
Divinity, how Men are prejudic'd in the Study of it, II. 274. — the Use of Guides in it, II. 794.
Docetæ, an Argument of theirs for their Heresy, III. 631.
Doctrine, Christian, (see CHRIST) — its Excellency, II. 514. — as an Improvement of the Moral Law, II. 514. — and as a Revelation of supernatural Truths, II. 515. — credible, I. 92. Tho' incomprehensible, not incredible, I. 737.
Doctrines generally receiv'd, III. 55.
Dog-Fish, II. 639.
Dogs, II. 635, 637, 638.
Doublers, II. 623, 695.
Dreams, a way of Revelation, I. 222.
DREBELL, his submarine Ship, II. 563.
Dromedary, II. 636. — his Stomach, II. 682.
Drought universal, that Opinion refuted, I. 38.
Ducks, II. 637, 638, 692. — their Bills, II. 633, 691. — their Legs, II. 679.
Ductility of Gold and Silver, II. 677.
Duration, Successive, the Nature of it, I. 58.
Duty (our) — to God, I. 473. II. 88. III. 446, 451. — to Man, I. 475. II. 89. III. 446. — to other Creatures, III. 447. — to our Selves, I. 476. II. 93. III. 447. The Instances and Measures of it not clear without Revelation, III. 599. — Heathen Systems clearer since the Light of the Gospel, III. 600.
Duties, difference between Moral and Positive, III. 739. E.
EAGLE, II. 638, 647.
Ear, its Situation, II. 605. — its Fabrick, II. 605. (outward in divers Animals, II. 605.) — outward Part, II. 605. — inward Part, II. 607. (in the Womb, *Id. ib.*) — its Muscles, II. 605. — its Wax, II. 607. — its Tympanum, and Use, II. 608. — its Incus, II. 608. — its Labyrinth, II. 609. — its semicircular Canals, II. 609. — its Consent with other Parts, II. 610.
Ear-drum, II. 690. Some Passages discover'd into its Region, II. 673.
Earth. See *Globe*, DES CARTES. — The Formation of it, II. 148. — its Diameter, &c. II. 557. — its Motion prov'd, II. 573. — accounted for, III. 174. — its Situation, I. 78. and Distance from the Sun, I. 79. III. 62. — its diurnal and annual Revolutions compar'd, I. 79. — their Use, II. 578. an Instance of Wisdom, III. 346. The Inclination of its Axis, and the Usefulness of it, I. 80. — a Character of the Divine Wisdom and Goodness, I. 81. — as is the Variety of the Seasons, I. 81. Its irregular Surface no Objection to these Attributes, I. 84. — The Beauties of such a Face of the Earth, I. 86. Its Soils and Moulds various, II. 584. — their several Uses, II. 584. — its various Strata, II. 585. — its various Caverns and Vulcano's, II. 587. — its Mountains and Vallies, II. 588. — its Inhabitants, II. 594. — Sensitive; as Man, II. 658. — Quadrupeds, II. 679. — Birds, II. 687. — Insects, II. 697. — Reptiles, II. 710. And Insensitive; as Vegetables, II. 714. The Earth suited to the Number of its Inhabitants, III. 424. The original Constitution of Things on it, III. 183. — the particular Laws they are subjected to, III. 184. — these Laws the Effect of Choice, III. 185. and appointed for very good Uses, *Id. ibid.* The principal of those Uses, *Id. ibid.* Objections against its Structure answer'd, III. 185, 579, 588, 592. Objections against the Earth, III. 182. First, with regard to the Inanimate Part of it, *Id. ibid.* — from the unequal Division of Day and Night, *Id. ibid.* — of Land and Water, III. 186. — from the Inequality of its Surface, III. 187. — from Heaths, Desarts, &c. III. 188. — from the Air, III. 188. — from the Produce of the Earth, III. 193. The Grounds of all these Objections, III. 198.
 Secondly, With regard to the Animate Part of it, III. 183, 199.
Earth-Worms, II. 644, 710, 712.
Ebionites used St. Matthew's Gospel, III. 392.
Eels, II. 637.
Effects, some prove the occasional Interposition of God, or some intelligent Being superior to Man, II. 163. — tho'

we cannot know which by the Work itself, II. 164.
Eggs, II. 655, 694. Birds lay a certain Number, II. 694.
Egypt, remarkable for Learning, II. 661.
 The seven Years of Plenty, and seven of Famine in it, II. 309. The Reason of God's Judgments upon it, III. 538, 542.
Egyptians, their Antiquity, III. 46. The Jews demanding Jewels, &c. of them, consider'd, III. 539. Why God suffer'd many of them to go away with his People, III. 545.
Element, Aristotle's fifth, III. 332.
Elephant, how she suckles her Young, II. 656. — his Legs, II. 679. — his Proboscis, II. 682.
ELI, God's Judgments against his Family, II. 331.
ELIAS. See *JOHN Baptist*.
ELIZABETH, Queen, her Height, II. 669.
Elk, his Legs, II. 679.
EMPEDOCLES, an ingenious Opinion of his, I. 33.
Enemy, the Jewish Notion of him, I. 142.
 [Forgiving and Loving our Enemies] how far carried by the Light of Nature, I. 800. — This Duty rightly stated, I. 803. — The Christian Obligation to it stronger and more equitable, I. 804.
ENOCH, his Faith, III. 22. — his Prophecy, the Import of it, III. 623.
Ephemeron Worms, II. 629, 648, 653.
Epicurean Theory, I. 68.
Epicureans, their Principles, I. 2, 3, 4, 11, 12, 13. — their darling Principle, III. 70. — their last Refuge, I. 8. — their distinguishing Character, I. 8. Ill qualified for the Christian Faith, why, I. 12.
EPICURUS, his Principles, III. 74. His Notion of a Deity, I. 2. III. 5, 314. — of Life, III. 314. — of the World, III. 158. — allow'd Moral Differences, III. 352. His religious Fear, III. 108. His Sermons upon Sanctity and religious Worship, I. 10. Advis'd his Disciples not to meddle in public Affairs, I. 10. His Philosophy odious to Government, I. 10. Cited no Authority in all his Writings, I. 13. A Conceit of his, I. 20. — his Atoms, I. 20. II. 632. His Account of the Production of Mankind, I. 34.
Equilibrium universal, none, I. 74.
Eternal. Something Eternal, I. 292, 372. II. 209. What is Eternal, I. 293. Claims to Eternal Existence, I. 293. The necessary Characters of an Eternal Being, I. 294, 295. — *viz.* Necessary Existence, and all possible Perfection, I. 294. — God is this, and the only Eternal Being, I. 295, 296, 372. II. 224.
Eternity, what, I. 286, 546. How we come by the Notion of it, I. 409. II. 292. Something must have existed from Eternity, II. 6. The Difficulty of conceiving it, II. 6. — not to be regarded, because equal on all Suppositions, II. 6. — of all Things, a Peripatetic Principle, I. 12. — the Absurdity of it, II. 507. III. 80. — of God, the Manner of conceiving it, II. 223. — with respect to Succession, II. 20.
Evangelists. See *Gospels*. — Their Character as Historians, I. 653. — compar'd with Moses, I. 654. — what they wrote attested by other Historians, I. 654. Consider'd barely as Historians, II. 757.
Evaporations, II. 573. — how caused, II. 579.
EVE, why called the Mother of all living, III. 618. Her Speech upon the Birth of Cain, III. 619. — and of Seth, shew'd her Expectation of being so, III. 620.
Ever (for) what meant by it, I. 240.
Evidence. See *Certainty*. The several Kinds of it, I. 187. II. 513.
Evil. See *Good*. — Its original, II. 47. — not to be accounted for from the Doctrine of the Transmigration of Souls, III. 600. — nor Fatal Necessity, III. 601. — nor from two opposite Principles, III. 601. — but from the Abuse of Liberty, as known by Revelation, III. 601. An Enquiry into the Cause and Origin of Evil, III. 157. A survey of it from the present State of Things, III. 157. The different Effects of it, III. 158. The Epicurean Notion of Evil, III. 158. — the weakness of it, III. 164. The Notions of the Stoics and other Philosophers about it, III. 159. — Poetical Representations of the same, III. 159. The Notion of the ancient Magians, III. 159. — of the Manichæans, III. 160. — this reviv'd by Mr. Bayle, III. 160. This Notion destructive of all Religion, III. 161. The Dignity and Weight of this Subject, III. 162.

- III. 162. What kind of Arguments proper to it, III. 163. — how it is to be treated, III. 163. The Weakness of the modern Objections, III. 165. — with respect to the Moral World, III. 166. The Weakness of the Hypothesis of two original Principles of Good and Evil, III. 166. See *Independent*. The Absurdity of them, III. 167. The Ideas of two such Principles contradictory to each other, III. 168. What is meant by Evil, III. 170. Three sorts — First The Evil of Imperfection, III. 170. — what Knowledge requisite to judge of such Imperfection, &c. III. 171. — wherein this Evil consists, III. 172. The Imperfection of the material Part of the World consider'd, III. 173. — of particular Qualities of Matter, III. 173. — of those Laws of Motion which Matter is subject to, III. 173. All Evils that arise from hence are only natural Imperfections, III. 179. Secondly, Natural Evil, III. 170. — with regard to the Inanimate Part of the Creation, III. 182. — with respect to the Animate Part of it, III. 183, 199. — with regard to Death, III. 200. — Diseases, III. 201. — Pain, &c. III. 202. Thirdly, Moral Evil, III. 170. — its Origin, III. 221. See *World*. — All Moral Evil arises from Free Agents abusing their Dispositions and Affections, III. 238. Physical Evil, what, III. 298. — Physical and Moral, no Objection against the Goodness of God, II. 249. III. 298. — The Effect of imperfect Natures, III. 307. The Evil of Punishment, III. 271. *Examination*, Impartial, requir'd of the Grounds of Religion, III. 286. *Example*, its Prevalency, I. 9. *Existence* (Self) — the true Notion of it, II. 9. See *Being*. *Existent*, God necessarily so, I. 294. See *Being*. *Expiation*. See *Atonement*. — The Business of it not to excite God's Pity, but to consult his Honour in shewing Mercy, II. 377. Expiation for Sin not unreasonable, II. 151. Christ's Expiation universal, I. 521. Legal Expiations only figur'd out the Way to Forgiveness, III. 725. *Expressions*, Figurative, in Scripture, how to be understood, I. 262. — Typical, how, I. 262. *Extension*, essential to Matter, III. 317. *Eye*, its admirable Structure, I. 45. — the Position of Man's, III. 71. — its Form spherical, most commodious for the Reception of Objects, II. 595. and for Motion, II. 596. — its Situation, II. 596. — Motion different in different Creatures, II. 596. — fixt in some, *Id. ibid.* — its Size, II. 597. — Number, II. 597. — its Parts, II. 598. — its Guard, II. 602. — Muscles, II. 599. — Tunics, *Id. ib.* — Humours, II. 600. — crystalline Humour, II. 600, 601. — aqueous Humour of it repair'd, II. 602. Its Nerves, Optic, and Motory, II. 602. Its Pupil, II. 600. Wounds of the Eye cur'd, II. 602. How far a Man's Prospect reaches by means of the Height of his Eye, II. 666. Monocular, II. 597. *Eyes* of Birds and Fishes, II. 601. — of Cormorants, II. 601. — of Insects, II. 698. — of Spiders, *Id. ibid.* — of the Sword-Fish, II. 602. — Shining or Feline, II. 600. *Eyelids*, their Structure and Use, II. 602. F. **FABLES**, the Method of instructing by them, and Symbols, was anciently very frequent, III. 759. — The Use of this Method, III. 760. *Face*, II. 675. The Variety of Mens Faces, II. 676. — the Necessity of this, III. 424. *Fact*, Matter of it to be known two ways, III. 130. *Faculty*, every one must have an Object, II. 555. III. 432. and *vice versa*, III. 427. *Faculties*, to be employ'd to the End for which they were given, III. 431. *Faith*, what, II. 203, 802. The Scripture Notion of it, III. 232, 246. — *Divine*, I. 248, 744. The Evidence of the Jewish and Christian Faith compar'd, I. 631. The Nature and Effects of it, III. 21. The several Instances of it, III. 21. No Necessity to accommodate Scripture to our common Notions, to render Faith reasonable, I. 755. — nor is it lawful, I. 757. A necessary Condition of the New Covenant, II. 407. — and of Christian Miracles, I. 54. Every Man should be able to give an Account of his Faith, II. 799. Articles of Christian Faith, II. 146. Second Article of Faith explain'd, II. 523. *Fall*, Mens State before it — to be immortally happy, while they were innocent, but to become mortal upon the first Transgression, II. 355. Two Objections against this solv'd, II. 357. After the Fall Men must be in a State of Misery, II. 362. — of Man, the Nature of it explain'd, III. 461. Necessary Methods upon it, III. 461. A Restoration to Perfection and Immortality necessary, III. 462. The Necessity of a Resurrection, III. 463. Of Assistance supernatural, and the Measure of it, III. 464. *Famine*, no Objection against the Goodness of the Air, III. 193. — how great in Jerusalem, I. 98. *Fatality*, Atheistical Notion of it refuted, I. 425. All Things not determin'd by it, I. 426. Introduc'd by Leucippus and Democritus, and still maintain'd by Atheists, III. 280. *Fathers of the Church*, or Ancients, who of them of primitive Antiquity, II. 274. Their Authority, II. 831. — to be relied on in Matters of Fact, II. 832. — not in Questions of Reason and Judgment, or Interpretation of Scripture, II. 832. — First, Because they were fallible, II. 832. — Secondly, Their Writings but few, II. 833. — Thirdly, and treat of but few things, II. 833. — Fourthly, They were unacquainted with Jewish Learning, II. 833. — Fifthly, Their Writings are difficult to be understood, II. 833. — Sixthly, They have erred in several material Points, II. 834. — Seventhly, The Number of their Authorities not to determine us in difficult Points, II. 834. — Eighthly, They should have no farther Weight than they are supported by Reason, II. 834. — Ninthly, We are not to receive their Notions implicitly, II. 834. *Fear*, Religious, I. 7. — of God (true) what, III. 282. — not grounded on ill Humour, II. 475. Goodness in the highest Perfection a just Cause of it, II. 479. The Advantages of it, III. 282. — *Superstitious*, of God, what, *Id. ibid.* — *Christian*, its Influence, I. 505. *Fears* of Damnation, not to be charged on Religion itself, I. 6. — who liable to them, I. 7. The Fears of the Wicked, prove the natural Sense Men have of the Existence of God, III. 48. *Feathers*. See *Bird*. *Feeling*, its Organ the Nerves, II. 615. — dispers'd thro' every Part of the Body, II. 615. *Feet*, II. 622. *Female*. See *Male*. *Fermentation*, what, III. 184. — by it Heat and Life are preserv'd, III. 184. *Festivals*, Jewish, the Reason of them, III. 545. — only to be observ'd in their own Country, III. 736. Those of the New Moons could not be exactly observ'd but in Judea, III. 742. — nor yet the Sabbath, *Id. ibid.* — nor the Sabbatic Years and Jubilees, III. 743. Their Cessation, III. 751. *Fibres*, II. 620. *Figure*. See *Motion*. *Final Causes*. See *Causes*. *Firstborn*, what, I. 131, 149. *Fish*. See *Water*. — Their Buoyancy, whence, II. 564, 713. Their Agreement with Birds, II. 601. Their Teeth, II. 634. — Cloathing, II. 644. — lousy, II. 704. Their Respiration, II. 713. Their Eyes, II. 713. Their Poise, II. 713. Their Tail, II. 713. Method of rowing themselves, II. 713. *Flesh*, not eaten in a State of Nature, III. 447. Liberty granted to Noah, &c. to eat it, III. 524. — *Human*, eating of it. See *Guiana*. *Flood*, II. 149. See *Deluge*. *Flowers*, II. 715. *Fly*. The Butter-fly, his Colours, II. 700. — white, II. 702, 704. — its Eggs, II. 706. The Cadew Fly, II. 699. Dragon Fly, II. 698. Fleth-Fly, II. 653, 699, 700. Ichneumon, II. 651, 654, 704. — its Generation, II. 705, 707.

707, 708, 709. — and textrine Art, II. 707.
 Scarab Fly, bred on Elm Leaves, II. 654, 699, 700.
 Flying of Man, II. 661.
Fætus. See *Blood, Ear, Respiration*.
 Food of Animals, II. 628. — its proportionate Quantity to the Eaters, II. 629. — various, suited to the Variety of Animals, II. 629. — peculiar to the peculiar Inhabitants of Places, II. 630.
 — for Man, a Revelation necessary concerning it, III. 454.
 Fool, Observations upon one dissected, II. 684.
 Foot, II. 667, 670.
 Foramen Ovale, II. 619, 620, 683.
 Force, distinguish'd from Necessity, I. 283.
 — Centripetal, III. 319.
 Foreknowledge, Divine, I. 173. Nothing can happen without it and God's Direction, III. 432. See *Knowledge, Prescience*.
 Forgiveness. See *Sin*.
 Fornication forbidden, I. 9.
 Fortitude, III. 446.
 Fortune, (see *Chance*) a true Notion of it, I. 64.
 Fountains, their Origin, II. 569, 574, 580, 590. — where found, II. 586.
 Fox, II. 635, 637, 638.
 Free Agent. See *Agent*.
 Freedom. See *Necessity*. — what, III. 416. Will and Freedom the same, III. 416. — the Perfection of it, *Id. ibid.*
 — of God, what, *Id. ibid.*
 — of Action, III. 14.
 Free-thinkers, their principal Reasonings examin'd, II. 741.
 Not Lovers of Truth for its own sake, *Id. ibid.*
 Afraid of the Consequences of the Truths of Religion, II. 781. Partial Examiners of Truth, II. 782.
 Their Abuse of several learned Men, II. 783. and of Scripture, II. 786. Use not all the Helps which God has afforded them, II. 789. Unreasonably reject all Guides, II. 794. An Objection of theirs, III. 8.
 Free-thinking, or private Judgment; the true Notion of it, II. 733. III. 9, 13, 14. The Extent of it, II. 733.
 Rules for it, II. 734. — a sincere Love of Truth for its own sake, II. 734. — No Dread of the Consequences that may follow from it, II. 735. — Sincerity and Impartiality, II. 736. — The Use of all the Helps God has afforded, II. 737. — A firm Resolution to embrace whatever he finds to be true, II. 737.
 — False, or Modern, what, II. 740. examin'd by the former Rules, II. 740. The Absurdity of it, II. 780. Mischiefs and Dangers of Free-thinking falsely, II. 862. — Hurtful to true Religion, II. 862. — Incapacitates Men for hearkning to proper Arguments, II. 863. — Tends to universal Scepticism, II. 863.
 — True, Use of Guides not inconsistent with it, II. 789.
 Every Man's Right, II. 797. and Duty, II. 798. Some Cautions to be observed in it, II. 804. Objections out of Scripture against it answer'd, II. 840. Not inconsistent with being responsible for the Use of it, III. 12.
 Friendship, the Christian Notion of it, II. 784. III. 150.
 Frogs, II. 683. — in their tad-pole State, II. 622. — from Rain, II. 652. — made in the Clouds, a vulgar Error, I. 40.
 Fruit, the Process of Nature in forming it, II. 715.
 Fruits communicate with their Roots, II. 714.
 Fruit-stones, the Danger of swallowing them, II. 673.
 Fuci, Fungi, &c. and their Seed, II. 717.

G.
Alli sylvestres, II. 640, 647.
Galls, II. 707, 708.
Geeze, II. 690, 691, 692. — their Legs, II. 679.
Gems, their Value, II. 676. Stories of them, II. 677.
Genealogies, the Reason of the Jewish Law about them, III. 550.
Generation. See *Corruption*. — The Impossibility of infinite Generations of Men a Proof of a God, II. 209.
 — of Animals, II. 652.
 — Anomalous, II. 695, 703.
 — Equivocal, refuted, I. 37. II. 27, 652, 700, 703. III. 199.
 — Material, nothing in it but Matter so and so dispos'd, III. 426.
Geography, Sacred, I. 190.
Ghost (Holy) See *Spirit*. — His Personality, I. 762.
 Prov'd to be God by his Attributes out of the Old Testament, I. 770. — and out of the New Testament, I. 763.
 VOL. III.

His Influence before the coming of Christ, I. 522.
Giants, II. 668.
Gibeonites, why preserv'd, III. 545.
Gizard, II. 636, 691.
Glands, II. 621, 634.
Glaucus (the), II. 639.
Globe, Terraqueous, a Survey of it, II. 561.
 First, Its Outworks consider'd. — The Atmosphere, II. 562.
 Light, II. 570. and Gravity, II. 572.
 Secondly, The Globe itself, — its Figure, II. 575. spherical, II. 575. — this Figure most commodious for Light and Heat, II. 576. — for the Distribution of the Waters, II. 576. and for the Winds, *Id. ibid.* The natural Cause of this Figure, II. 576. — its Bulk, II. 577. — its Motion, II. 577. — its Place, II. 578. — its Distribution into Earth and Waters, II. 579. — its Balance, *Id. ibid.* See *Earth, Water*.
Gnat, II. 633. How the Males are distinguish'd, II. 699.
 Their Generation, II. 703, 706. Its three States, II. 706.
Goat, his Legs, II. 679.
God. See *Apprehensions, Assistance, Being, Belief, Dependence, Existence, Foreknowledge, Knowledge, Perfections, Revelation, Sovereignty*.
 Idea of the Word, II. 219, 465. That we have no Idea of Him false, I. 368.
 Idea of Him, whence, III. 345. — not from Fear, I. 375.
 II. 208. — nor Ignorance of second Causes, I. 375. II. 207.
 — nor from Tradition, II. 207. — nor from Policy, I. 380.
 II. 208. — as it could neither be invented, I. 381. nor understood, I. 383. nor universal, I. 384.
 Whence thought innate, III. 56. See *Idea*.
 The Atheists Objection to it does not amount to a Contradiction, III. 294.
 Idea of Him includes Self-existence, II. 11.
 Whatever God is, is his very Essence, and that independently, &c. III. 469.
 Spinoza's Definition of God, III. 245.
 The general Notion of God laid down, III. 406.
 1st, That He is Self-existent, *Id. ibid.*
 2dly, Absolutely perfect, III. 407. See *Perfections*.
 3dly, Was Creator of the World, III. 409.
 4thly, Is Governour of it, III. 411. See *Government*.
 — His Nature and Attributes consider'd, I. 285. — discoverable by Reason, III. 442. — discover'd by the Christian Religion, II. 505. The Christian Doctrine concerning Him, I. 467. III. 482. — simple, III. 409. (without Passion, I. 454.) and indivisible, III. 409. Divisible according to Spinoza, III. 301. This contradicts his Unity, III. 301. See *Unity of God*.
 God a Spirit, I. 387. Atheists Objections against it, I. 388. — refuted, I. 390. The Absurdity of supposing Him corporeal, I. 399. Atheists Objections against his being immaterial, II. 233. answer'd, II. 234.
 The Knowledge of God possible from his Attributes, I. 406. — This the best way of Reasoning concerning his Nature, I. 406.
 — His Being (and Attributes) — That God is; not a Self-evident Proposition, II. 204. — Arguments to prove it, I. 286. II. 201. See *Animals, Apparitions, Being, Body, Conscience, Creatures, Demoniacs, Fears, Generation, Gravitation, Man, Miracle, Prodigies, Prophecy, Providence, Soul, Stoics, Witches, World*.
 What kind of Arguments those must be, II. 202. Those taken from Reason proper to be insisted on, II. 203.
 Those two made use of by Des Cartes not to have great Stress laid upon them, II. 204.
 The Possibility of it, I. 286. The Probability of it, I. 287. The Certainty of it, I. 291. II. 495.
 His Being prov'd — First, From Something being eternal, II. 209. See *Eternal*. — From the Impossibility of an infinite Succession of Causes and Effects, II. 209.
 Secondly, From the Works of God (of Creation) II. 209, 561. III. 21. — From the Origin and Frame of the World, I. 52, &c. II. 498. — From the heavenly Bodies, II. 210. — From the Structure of human Bodies, I. 24, 35, 46, &c. II. 210, 500. — From the Regularity of the Acting even of inanimate Creatures, II. 211. — From the excellent Harmony of the Creation, II. 213. viz. from the Perfection of Beings visible to us, II. 213.
 III. 60. and from the Subserviency of the less noble to the more noble Creatures, II. 213. — From the Consideration of human Souls, I. 15, &c. — From their Faculties,

- culties, II. 501. — from Motion, III. 315. (God the Original of it, II. 232.)
- Arguments consider'd — from the visible Frame of Things, I. 291. and from the Nature of Man, II. 485. (— His Works, great and excellent, II. 721. — Inquiries into them commendable, II. 722. — manifest to all, II. 722. — ought to excite Fear and Obedience, II. 723. and Thankfulness, II. 724. and move us to pay God his due Homage and Worship, particularly that of the Lord's Day, II. 725. See *Sabbath*.)
- Thirdly, From the Continuance of the World, I. 74. By the manifest Footsteps of an overruling Providence, II. 499.
- Fourthly, From some extraordinary Phænomena, which prove that there are invisible Beings, II. 216.
- Fifthly, From the Consent (see *Consent*) and Testimony of Mankind, I. 53, 287. II. 205, 500, 505. — From natural Conscience, II. 214. and from the Fears of the Wicked, III. 48. — from Tradition, III. 42, 52, 53. Objections against his Being examin'd, I. 367. — refuted, I. 21, 368. II. 219.
- Being, in God, in the utmost Perfection, I. 294, 373, 409. III. 408. and Life, I. 410. and Sensibility, I. 410. and Reason, I. 411. and Happiness, I. 410. and Righteousness, I. 412.
- His Being desirable, II. 4.
- His All-sufficiency maintain'd by all Sects, I. 13.
- His Will determines itself according to the eternal Reason of Things, II. 83.
- God not a necessary Agent, I. 426. II. 246. Two sorts of Necessity in God, of Nature and of Existence, II. 248.
- The Necessity of his doing always what is best and fittest in the Whole, II. 52. The Impossibility of his doing Evil, II. 53. God may oblige Men to act such a particular Way, I. 305. What our Reason approves or condemns, we are oblig'd by God to do or not to do, I. 312.
- The Neglect of this inexcusable in Man, III. 82. God will distinguish between those, who sometimes Sin, and those who constantly do so, I. 318. His Condescension in suiting his Laws to the Nature of Mankind, III. 379.
- His *Immutability*, III. 417. does not infer, that every Ordinance of his must be immutable, I. 703.
- His *Immensify*, the Manner of our conceiving it, II. 21.
- His *Wisdom*. See *Wisdom* of God. } prov'd from
- His *Goodness*. See *Goodness* of God. }
- the Structure and Motions of the Earth, I. 79. — from the Variety of its Seasons, I. 81. — from its Atmosphere, I. 82. — from the Waters of the Ocean, I. 83. The seeming Deformity of the Earth and Ocean, no Objection to these Attributes, I. 84. — nor the Number of Insects, &c. and their being noxious, II. 581.
- His *Mercy* to fallen Man, all Hopes of it must be on Conditions agreeable to God's first Covenant, II. 363.
- His *Justice*. See *Justice* of God.
- His *Truth*. See *Truth* of God.
- His *Holiness*. See *Holiness* of God.
- His *Power*. See *Power* of God.
- Gods, their Insensibility, according to the Epicureans, I. 3. — where plac'd by them, III. 301.
- *Inferior*, the general Opinion concerning them, III. 55.
- Godfathers* and *Godmothers*, their Duty, II. 544.
- Good*, the true Notion of it in the natural World, III. 197.
- Good and Evil*, Homer's Account of the Origin of it, III. 307. — essentially different, II. 358. The Foundation of God's Laws, II. 417. The most Profligate sensible of their difference, II. 86. No Atheistical Scheme can account for the Appearances of it, III. 308, &c. The Mixture and Inequality of it, proceeds not from two contrary necessary Principles, but from one free intelligent Being, III. 312. Lucretius's Account of it, *Id. ibid.*
- All Things must be for the best in all respects, III. 432.
- That there is *Moral Good* and *Evil*, I. 415. Objection against the Difference of it, III. 350.
- Goodness* in Man, III. 74.
- The same in Kind, tho' not in Degree, in all rational Creatures, III. 89.
- Essential to the divine Nature, III. 88.
- in God, I. 461, 463. — what, III. 411. Prov'd from his Holiness, III. 418. Declar'd by the Conversation of our Lord, I. 464. The Nature of it explain'd, III. 418. Justice, Mercy, Equity, Patience, only different Operations of it, III. 418. — the Cause of Fear, II. 479. Things opposite to it displeasing to Him, II. 479. No Defect in it, if He suffer those to be miserable who disown his Being, III. 83.
- Atheists Objection against it refuted, III. 298. Spinoza's Rejection of it from the State of Good and Evil in the World, absurd, II. 249. III. 298, 306, 307. This Absurdity farther prov'd, from the Necessity of good and evil Thoughts in the Self-existent Being, III. 308.
- Gospel*. What is to be understood by the Gospel, I. 237. — what by another, I. 238. The Gospel is always to continue the same, I. 239. No Proof of another, I. 240. No need of another, I. 241. It precludes all other, I. 243.
- Its imperfect Promulgation consider'd, I. 515. The Methods us'd by Providence for the Recovery of fallen Man, till the Promulgation of the Gospel, I. 517.
- The Knowledge of the Gospel in the first Ages of the World, III. 609, 640. Its Light to be distinguish'd from that of Nature before it, III. 111. What is declar'd in it over and above the Law of Nature, I. 456. The gradual Revelation of it, III. 581, &c. How it was publish'd, I. 518. All Nations not qualify'd to receive it at its first Propagation, III. 379.
- The swift *Propagation* of it, I. 9, 583. II. 664. See *Propagation*. — Its Success a Proof of its divine Authority, I. 205, 823. The Relation between Adam and Christ a Proof of it, II. 415. See *Miracle*.
- Gospel-History*, the Credibility of it, I. 563. prov'd — from the Circumstances of the Matters recorded, and of the History itself, I. 563. — from the good Capacity of the Authors to know the Truth of what they related, I. 574. — from the strong Obligation they were under to write nothing but the Truth, I. 576. — from the good Evidences we have of their Honesty and Faithfulness, I. 578. — from the Confirmation which was given to the Truth of their History by God himself, I. 580. If their History had been false, it could never have gain'd Credit, I. 565.
- Anti-Gospel-Histories, how they came to be lost, I. 570.
- The *Doctrines* of the Gospel, what, I. 588. — well prov'd by the History of it, *Id. ibid.*
- The Gospel the Word of God, prov'd — by the divine Excellency of its Doctrine, II. 514. — by the exact Accomplishment of the many ancient Prophecies relating to it, II. 516. — from the divine Power and Goodness manifested in the Miracles that attested it, II. 517. — by a vast Cloud of credible Witnesses, II. 519. — from its marvellous Progress and Continuance, II. 520.
- The fundamental *Principles* of the Gospel, III. 263. In it — the Assurance of the Pardon of Sin, III. 490. (It removes the guilty Fears of Sinners, I. 463.) In it, the Assurance — of Assistance, III. 492. — of Acceptance, *Id. ibid.* and of a future State — of Happiness, III. 493. — and Misery, III. 494.
- The Perfection of the Gospel-Rule of Life, III. 488.
- The Antithesis between the *Law* and the *Gospel* stated, III. 722. — wherein it exceeds the Law, I. 705.
- The *Grace* of the Gospel, sometimes signifies Forgiveness, III. 724. and is so oppos'd to the Merit of Works, and to the Efficacy of Legal Expiations, III. 725. It does otherwise import the Gifts of the Holy Ghost, III. 725. and so the Law of Moses, literally consider'd, is oppos'd to it, III. 725. because Grace then given was only in Virtue of the Gospel, III. 726.
- The *Truth* of the Gospel is oppos'd to the Shadows of the Law, either as containing livelier Descriptions of a future State, or as shewing the true Atonement effected by Christ, III. 726.
- The Authors of the Gospel and Law, III. 727.
- The Gospel Style, II. 760.
- Gospels*. The Four Gospels as credible as the Five Books of Moses, I. 101. prov'd — from their Authors, *Id. ibid.* — from the Books themselves, I. 102. and the Manner of their Conveyance to us, I. 103.
- The Jews Objections against their Credibility, I. 117. That the History of the Four Gospels is inconsistent, First, With itself, or with the Notoriety of Matter of Fact, I. 117. This they attempt to prove, 1st, From the Genealogy of St. Matthew compar'd with that of St. Luke, I. 117.
- 2dly, From the Relation of Jesus cursing the Fig-tree, I. 118.
- 3dly,

- 3dly, From the Prayer of Jesus, *Luke* xxiii. 24. I. 120.
 4thly, From the various relating of the Resurrection of Jesus, I. 122.
 5thly, From *John* ii. 20. [Forty-six Years was this Temple in Building] whereas it was finish'd in eight Years, I. 125.
 Secondly, With the Law of Moses, I. 126. This they attempt to prove — 1st, From *Matt.* v. 34. compar'd with *Deut.* vi. 13. I. 126.
 2dly, From Jesus's calling the Loving one another [a New Commandment] and his Commandment; whereas this was a Precept of Moses, I. 128.
 3dly, From Jesus's forbidding Polygamy and Divorces, which were allow'd by Moses, I. 128.
 Thirdly, That it contains some Things inconsistent with the common Belief of Christians, I. 130. as, — 1st, The Belief of the perpetual Virginity of the blessed Virgin, which is said to be inconsistent with *Matt.* i. 25. and other Expressions, I. 130, 131.
 2dly, The Divinity of Christ, inconsistent with *Matt.* xix. 17. I. 132. — *Matt.* xx. 23. I. 133. — *Mark* vi. 5. I. 134. and *Mark* xiii. 32. I. 135.
 3dly, The Belief of Christians of the Time between the Death and Resurrection of Christ, inconsistent with *Matt.* xii. 40. I. 135.
 Fourthly, That the Evangelists misquote and misapply Testimonies out of the Old Testament, I. 138. — 1st, That they quote what is no where to be found; as *Matt.* ii. 23. I. 138. — *Matt.* v. 43. I. 141. — *John* vii. 38. I. 143. — *John* xix. 28. I. 143. — *John* xix. 36. I. 144.
 2dly, That they quote falsely; as, *Mark* ii. 26. [Abiathar is put for Abimelech] I. 144. — *Matt.* xxiii. 35. [Barachias for Jehoiada] I. 145. — *Matt.* xxvii. 9. [Jeremy for Zechary] I. 146.
 3dly, That they misapply what they quote; as *Matt.* ii. 15. I. 148. — *Matt.* ii. 17, 18. I. 150.
 — The Gospels receiv'd — were either written or allow'd by some Apostle, III. 391. They were written from the Beginning of Christianity, *Id. ibid.* They are the same now, as when they were first written, III. 395.
 Great part of the Various Readings trivial, III. 397.
 Not corrupted, II. 753. — by Heretics, III. 398.
 Objection, that Anastasius had a Design to alter all the Four Gospels, answer'd, II. 759.
 — *Apocryphal* Gospels — no Evidence that any of them were written by those whose Names they bear, III. 395.
Government, God's. The Certainty of his universal Government, II. 495. God equally capable of governing all Things, as well as any Thing, III. 432. See *World*.
 Natural Things govern'd in a natural way, III. 435.
 and Rational Things in a rational way, III. 91, 435.
 Man govern'd as an understanding free Creature, III. 435.
 From the good or ill Use Men make of their Liberty, different Methods of Government, III. 436. In Innocence, nothing necessary but Preservation, III. 436.
 What Means of Government necessary upon the Increase of Sin, III. 437. The Government of the World, consider'd as in a State of Corruption, III. 461.
 — *Coercive* Government — its Rise, III. 450. See *State* of pure Nature.
Grace. See *Gospel*. — Divine Grace, II. 410.
Grasshoppers, II. 699.
Gravitation (see *Nature*) III. 323 — what, III. 184. — by it the Earth becomes a Globe, III. 184. An Account of this Phænomenon in Nature, I. 64. — not essential to Matter, I. 70. — Universal, I. 71. — proceeds not from Mechanism, but from Divine Impression, I. 72, 73.
 The Epicurean Notion of it, II. 227.
Gravity, what, I. 73. Its Properties and Proportions, II. 572. Its Uses, *Id. ibid.* The Cause of Levity, II. 573.
Greeks, who, in Scripture, I. 631.
Grotto Podpetchio, II. 587.
Grotto's, their Use, II. 587.
Gryllotalpa, II. 706.
Guiana, the Pleasure of the Savages of that Country in eating of human Flesh, I. 9. This an Impediment to their Conversion, I. 9.
Guilt, the Conscioufness of it, I. 462. It estranges Mens Minds from God, I. 462. It arises from a kind of natural Instinct, I. 463. It cannot be transferr'd, III. 256.
Guira Tangeima, II. 648.
Gullet, II. 635.
Gulls, II. 638.
Gun-shot, its Velocity, II. 571. — heard afar off, II. 611.
H
HADES, II. 576.
Hair, II. 643.
Hand, II. 666, 670. — Its Fingers, why of different Length, II. 666. Variety of Mens Hand-writing, II. 676.
Hanged Persons reviving, II. 619.
Happiness, what, I. 544. Two hundred eighty eight different Opinions concerning it, III. 467. The Gospel-Scheme of it, III. 481, 482. Christianity has provided for the Happiness of Man, III. 482.
 Its Influence on human Actions, I. 306.
 There will be a State of pure compleat Happiness only for the Good, I. 319.
 Eternal Happiness of the Blessed credible, II. 156. — Immortal. See *Life* Eternal.
 Future Happiness in Heaven, II. 411. — consists chiefly in the Change and Improvement of our Nature, II. 412.
Harbinger, one expected before the Messiah, III. 715.
 What Grounds for such Expectation, III. 716. Call'd by some Elijah the Prophet, III. 717. His Office to point out the Messiah, III. 718. and to prepare the People for his Reception, *Id. ibid.* How this was fulfilled in John the Baptist, III. 719. See *JOHN* the Baptist.
 A second coming of an Harbinger reasonable to be suppos'd, III. 721.
HARDOUN, his wild Notion of the Classics, II. 761.
Hares, II. 596, 635, 651, 681. Their Ears, II. 605, 606.
 Their Legs, II. 679.
Hawks, II. 638, 651.
Head, the Elevation of Man's, III. 71. — of Quadrupeds different, II. 680.
Hearing, its Organ, II. 604, 610. and Object, II. 610.
 The want of it, how supplied, II. 604. — how perform'd, II. 606, 608, 609, 690. Made quicker by Disease, II. 674.
Heart, consider'd, I. 37. II. 672. Heart and Brain of Man, their Communication, II. 684.
 — of Quadrupeds, II. 683.
 The Pericardium not fastned to the Diaphragma, *Id. ibid.*
 — of a Lamprey, II. 673.
Heat and Cold, not Effects, but Causes of the Variation of the Winds, II. 566. Heat of the Air under the Line, compar'd with that of our Bodies, II. 567. That of the torrid Zone, II. 567, 580. Subterraneous Heat, II. 580.
Heathen, its Etymology, I. 56.
 The State of the Heathen World both before and since the Separation of the Jews, II. 316. consider'd — as wanting several Things necessary to their Happiness, III. 467. Their Ignorance and Wickedness, II. 506, 507. III. 467.
 — *Philosophers*, their Idolatry, Ignorance, and Immorality, II. 506, 507. — ignorant of the Origin of the World, and our Dependence upon God, II. 507. Could give no true Account — of the Depravity and Misery of Mankind, II. 508. — of the Incarnation, Sufferings, and Mediation of the Son of God for Men, II. 508. Had no Notion of any Way in which God would pardon their Offences, II. 509. — nor of the Sanctification of a Sinner by the Holy Ghost, II. 509. Had no perfect Scheme of Morality, II. 509. Had no Certainty of the eternal Rewards and Punishments of a Future State, II. 510. III. 269. Their Knowledge owing to the Jews, or their Books, III. 567. Their Methods of opposing the Christian Revelation, III. 138.
Heaven, what, I. 547. What meant by it in the Language of the Scripture, II. 245.
Hebrew Idioms, I. 111, 112, 124, 131, 134, 136, 137, 139, 261, 363, 676, 769. II. 182, 313, 389. III. 507, 687.
 — *Words*, I. 57, 120, 128, 134, 136, 137, 139, 140, 145, 147, 219, 234, 357, 406, 770. II. 170, 172, — 175, 178, 183, 184, 185, 279, 561, 668, 692, 712, 725, 726, 843. III. 614, 620, 621, 622, 624, 629, 637, 646, 649, 650, 652, 655, 659, 660, 662, 685, 694, 696, 703, 705, 709, 713, 715, 717, 719, 733, — 736, 745, 747, 749, 751, 752, 757, 772, 775.
Hebrews, the Epistle to them, not material who wrote it, I. 556.
Hedgehog, II. 643, 650.
Hell, what, I. 547.
 Its Punishments, Plutarch's Observation upon them, I. 7.
Hemlock,

Hemlock, II. 583. A Cure for the Farcy, *Id. ibid.* and for Want of Sleep, *Id. ibid.*
Hens, II. 638, 639
Heretics in the primitive Church, serv'd to preserve the Purity of the Copies of the New Testament, I. 663.
 How they affect Religion, III. 371.
Heresy, of Ebion and Cerinthus, II. 522. — of Arius and Socinus, II. 523.
HERMONTIMUS CLAZOMENIUS, a Story of him, III. 138.
Heron, II. 656, 692.
Hills run East and West, II. 589.
Historical Books, the Nature and Design of those that follow the Pentateuch, III. 545.
History, how to judge of the Truth of it, I. 189, &c.
 Errors of Transcribers do not affect the Truth of it, I. 192.
 What a credible one, III. 465. The Credibility of the Scripture-History, III. 465, 499. — to be examin'd step by step, III. 499.
HOBBS, his Principles, III. 281, 310, 349. His Tenets refuted, III. 453. His Account of the Origin of Religion, I. 376. II. 475.
Holiness (see *Punishment*) what, III. 416.
 — of God, what meant by it, I. 434, 454. III. 417.
 In what it consists, II. 359. God not the Author of Sin, III. 266, 324. Why He permits it, II. 249.
HOMER, when he lived, I. 171.
Honour, not a sufficient Foundation of Virtue, II. 254.
HONYWOOD, Mrs. II. 628.
Hop-strings, their Use, II. 714.
Hope to fallen Man, whence restor'd, I. 463, 464.
 That of the Infidel and Christian, how different, II. 549, 558. Christian Hope, its Influence, I. 505. The Reasonableness of it, II. 549, 560.
Hornets, II. 633, 656, 702, 707.
Hounds, their Sagacity, II. 613, 637.
 Blood-hound, II. 637.
Human Nature. See *Nature*.
Humanity, the general Laws of it, III. 448, 449.
Humility, a Qualification for receiving Religion, I. 436.
Humour, (III) Fear of God not grounded on it, II. 475.
Hyæna, II. 637.
Hydrocantbari, II. 699.
 I.
JACOB, the Prophecy that his Posterity should be more powerful than Esau's, fulfill'd, II. 305. That a Star and Scepter should rise out of his Posterity, II. 324.
JAMES, St. his Epistle Canonical, II. 752.
Jaws, II. 634.
Ichneumon Flies. See *Fly*. — Wasps. See *Wasps*.
Idea. See *God*. — The chief of ours, I. 296.
 — *Innate*, II. 501. — of a God, a Mistake, I. 2. nor is it requisite, nor pretended to by Religion, I. 23. See *Notions* (common). — How to be understood, II. 203.
 Epicurus falls in with this Notion, III. 32.
Identity, Personal, what, II. 775. — not to be accounted for from Matter, III. 336. — nor from the particular Organization of human Body, III. 337.
Idleness, the darling Principle of the Epicureans, III. 70.
Idolatry, Pagan, its Origin, III. 484. Its Ceremonies, I. 8.
 — *Vulgar*, what, I. 13. — of the Ancients, III. 471.
 The World universally degenerated into Idolatry, III. 527.
 Idolatry to be destroy'd, and Idolaters converted, III. 673.
 This Destruction of it appear'd in the Silence of the Oracles, III. 675. This insisted on as a Proof of Christ's Kingdom, III. 675.
JEHOVAH, what it implies, II. 525, 530.
Jerusalem, the Signs preceding its Destruction, as foretold by our Saviour, I. 97, 98, 99, 204. III. 140.
 Its Temple attempted to be rebuilt by Julian, III. 141.
JESUS. See *MESSIAH*, *CHRIST*, *Mediator*.
 — His *Life*, the external Condition and Circumstances of it consider'd, I. 482. — mean and obscure, *Id. ibid.*
 — instructive and exemplary, I. 483. Why so many Years of it are pass'd over in Silence, I. 484. Suited to the Condition of human Nature, I. 486. Innocent and inoffensive, I. 487. (Some Objections to the Inoffensiveness of it, I. 489.) Integrity and Prudence join'd in it, I. 490.
Jesus an Example — of Piety, I. 493. — of Charity, I. 496. — of Purity, I. 497. — of Humility, I. 498. — of Meekness, I. 499. — of Patience, I. 500. — of Constancy and Courage, I. 501.

Whether God might justly punish Him for other Men, I. 794.
 — Prejudices against his *Person* consider'd, III. 144.
 His mean and suffering State, III. 144. His dying, and yet promising Life to others, III. 145.
 The Dignity of his Person, III. 146. The Unity of his two Natures, III. 146.
 Objections against the Time of his Appearance, III. 147. — to the Place, III. 147. The Time in which He came, was of all others the most seasonable, III. 577.
 A Revelation absolutely necessary at that Time, both for Jews and Gentiles, III. 577.
 Prejudices against his *Doctrine*, III. 149. from its too great Plainness, *Id. ibid.* and from being too sublime, *Id. ibid.* from its Deficiency in some Points of Morality, III. 150. and too great Severity in others, *Id. ibid.* and from its not being effectual, III. 151.
Jesus is the Saviour promis'd, III. 570. See *Saviour*.
 The Dissolution of the Jewish Commonwealth an Argument of this, III. 577.
Jews (see *CHRIST*) who, in Scripture, I. 631. Their Character with regard to Religion, I. 446. True Religion, how convey'd from the Jews to other Nations, III. 565. The Knowledge of the Heathen Philosophers owing to the Jews, or their Books, III. 567. Heathen Superstition borrow'd from the Jews, *Id. ibid.* Poets, their Inventions borrow'd from them, *Id. ibid.*
 Their Privileges, I. 107. God's peculiar People, II. 316. — his Covenant with them, II. 317. — his Wisdom shewn in their Laws, III. 541. As they were a dull stupid People, III. 541. As they were prone to Idolatry, III. 541. As they were to be kept a separate People, III. 541. As they were to be an holy People, III. 541. Motives given to observe their Laws, III. 542. The Necessity of temporal Promises to them, III. 543. The Reason of their Festivals, III. 545.
 Why they believe their Scriptures, I. 636.
 Why said to be sanctified by Ritual Observances, I. 677.
 Have as much Reason to own the divine Mission of Jesus, as to believe that of Moses, I. 92. — prov'd from a Comparison — of their Miracles, I. 92. — of their Predictions, I. 94. — of Tradition, Jewish and Christian, I. 100. — of the Pentateuch and the Four Gospels, I. 101.
 Corollaries from hence, I. 104.
 In what Opinions the Christians and Jews agree, I. 636.
 Their Arguments to prove Christ's Miracles performed by the Devil, prove the same against Moses, I. 645.
 Jewish Objections — against the public Manner of Christ's performing his Miracles, I. 647. — against his authoritative Way of proceeding in them, I. 648.
 — Their *Infidelity*, I. 91. — not to be imputed to mere Ignorance, I. 105. The principal Causes of it, *Id. ibid.* — their Love of the World, *Id. ibid.* — their Malice, *Id. ibid.* — their Pride, I. 107. Some other Causes of less Malignity, I. 108. — as, overvaluing of Rites, I. 108. — implicit Faith, I. 108. and Opinion of their oral Law, I. 109.
 How it may be said that God harden'd them, I. 111.
 Their want of Means of Salvation, I. 112. The Stumbling-blocks which Christians have laid before them, I. 112. *viz.* The Christians evil Lives, I. 112. and weak Arguments, I. 113. The corrupt Doctrines and Practices of the Church of Rome, I. 113. The Sects and Quarrels of Christians, I. 114. Other Obstacles to their Conversion, I. 114. — Ill treatment of them, I. 114. — Our neglect of the Hebrew Language, I. 115. — Their Education of their Children in Prejudices against the Christian Religion, I. 115. — Their Hatred and Persecutions of such as turn from them to Christianity, I. 115. — The Insincerity and wicked Lives of such as are converted, I. 116. Their Objections against the Credibility of the Four Gospels, I. 117. See *Gospels*.
 The external Dispensations of Providence to them, had a mystical Respect to the everlasting Covenant with all Nations, III. 651. They represented the Christian Church, III. 653. — foretold that many should fall away, III. 672. Their Enemies figur'd the Enemies of the Church, who are either to be reclaim'd, or destroy'd, III. 672. Apostate Jews to be converted, III. 673. to be join'd with the Gentiles in one Kingdom, *Id. ibid.* — this the everlasting Kingdom describ'd by Daniel, III. 674.
 — Their

— Their *State* when our Saviour appear'd, I. 447.
 The Straits the Jews were put to soon after the Appearance of Christ, III. 679.
 Christ's Prophecy concerning their Dispersion fulfill'd, III. 141. The Reason of the Dissolution of the Jewish Commonwealth, III. 576. This an Argument that Jesus was the Saviour, III. 577.
 The Measures of God's Providence over them, alter'd with their Constitution, II. 321.
 The Reasons of their present Dispersion, II. 322.
 The Reason of Cessation of Prophecy among the Jews, III. 558. Proper Means to keep up their Faith in that Interval to the coming of Christ, III. 558.
Ignorance. See *Heathens*, and *Philosophers*. — Ages of it, II. 663. Times of it proper for Imposture, III. 388.
 — of Mankind, with regard — to God — to themselves, and their Duty, I. 465. — to the Origin of the World, II. 507. III. 369, 370. — Forgiveness of Sins, II. 509. III. 369, 370. — Happiness — moral and natural Evil, II. 508. III. 369, 370. and the Government of the World before Revelation, III. 369, 370.
Imagination, not the Result of mere organiz'd Matter, II. 239.
Immaterial Substance, some of the Properties of it as well known, as some of material Substance, II. 235. III. 294.
 Tho' we could form no Idea of an Immaterial Being, this would not prove the Impossibility of its Existence, II. 235. III. 295.
 — Immaterial Beings may be finite and distinct, III. 325.
Immateriality implies no Contradiction, III. 294. Atheists Objections against it answer'd, III. 294, 295.
 Immateriality of a finite Being inconceivable, refuted, III. 325.
Immortality, the chief Cause of Infidelity, II. 193, 354.
Immortality. See *Soul*, *Life Eternal*.
 Consistent with Imperfection and Mutability, according to Plutarch, III. 302. An implicit Promise of it contain'd in the Threatning of Death, II. 357.
 Immortality and Life brought to light by the Gospel, I. 700.
 The Hopes of it to be joyfully quitted, why, I. 5.
 Objections to it — First, Its Terms suppos'd impossible, I. 5. Secondly, Contradictory to the Interest of Mankind, I. 6. The Desire of it natural, I. 8. It is Self-Preservation, I. 8.
Impartiality. See *Free-thinking*.
Impenetrability, III. 323.
Impenitence, the Causes of it, I. 272.
Incarnation, the Credibility of it, I. 760. The Doctrine of it deliver'd in the New Testament, I. 764. agreeable to the Old, I. 770. and the Sense of the ancient Synagogue, I. 771. — not repugnant to natural Reason, I. 774.
 — The Mystery of Christ's Incarnation, III. 491.
Incomprehensibility, no Objection to the Being of a God, II. 220.
Independent, the Hypothesis of two such Principles, cannot account for the Appearances of Good and Evil, III. 309. because, if unequal, the greater destroys the less; if equal, they only produce Confusion, III. 310. — an Accommodation between them absurd, III. 311. — an Opposition between them would produce an equal Mixture of Good and Evil, contrary to the present State of Things, III. 311.
Independent Being. See *Being*.
Individuation, Matter not a Principle of it, III. 333.
Infallibility, no Remedy against Error, II. 816.
 — of Rome, I. 254.
Infidelity, what to be ascribed to, I. 430. III. 782. Immorality the chief Cause of it, II. 193, 354. Other Causes of it besides want of Evidence, III. 4. — as Negligence, III. 5. — vicious Practices, *Id. ibid.* — Pride, &c. III. 6.
 Motives to Infidelity — First, An Affectation of Singularity, III. 288. Secondly, An Aversion to the Errors that have crept into true Religion, III. 289. Thirdly, A Desire of being uncontrolled, *Id. ibid.* Fourthly, The want of a careful Examination, III. 291.
 — Modern Infidelity, the Causes of it, II. 541. The Violence of Mens carnal worldly Inclinations, II. 541. The want of careful Instruction and Restraint in time of Youth, II. 544. An undue Conceit of human Sufficiency, II. 545. The Abuse of Prosperity, II. 546. The Imprudence and Impunity of vicious profane Persons, II. 546.
 Two ways of propagating Infidelity, III. 596. either by extolling natural Light, or by depreciating Christian Revelation, III. 596. — unreasonable, I. 265. — inexcusable, III. 12.
Infidels, their Credulity, II. 487.
 An Exhortation to them, I. 621. II. 255.
Infinite, in Knowledge, Power, &c. what, I. 373. — how to be conceiv'd, I. 286.
Infinity, when applied to God not unintelligible, II. 221.
Insects, II. 697. Their Shape and Structure, II. 698. — adapted to their manner of Life, *Id. ibid.* Their Mouth, II. 633, 648. Their Cornea and Eyes, II. 698. Their Antennæ, and their Use, II. 699. Their Parts and Motion, II. 699. Their Conveyance from Place to Place, II. 699. Their Poises, II. 700. Their Legs and Feet, II. 699. and Wings, II. 700. Their Sleeping State, II. 702. Generated in Waters, II. 703. Their Generation, II. 703, 704. Their Production, whence, I. 39. Surprising Minuteness of some, II. 700. Their natural Poison, II. 654. Their Sagacity to secure themselves against Winter, II. 701. — in choosing proper Places for their Eggs and Sperm, II. 703. — in repositing their Eggs, II. 706. — in their different Nidification, II. 648, 654, 706. Their architectonic Skill, II. 707. Their Apparatus for laying their Eggs, II. 653. Their Care of their Young, II. 638, 639, 647, 703.
Inspiration, what, I. 219. How an inspir'd Person can be satisfy'd of the Truth of a Revelation, I. 178, 536. (The Difference between it and Imagination, I. 178.) Our having no Experience of it no Objection against it, I. 178. How Persons not inspir'd are to judge of the Truth of a Revelation, I. 180. II. 742. — from the Credibility of the Person inspir'd, I. 180. — from the Subject-Matter, worthy of God, I. 182. — from the Testimony produc'd for it, I. 183.
 — of Scripture twofold, I. 208. With respect to the Manner of it, threefold, I. 219. The Difference between it, and natural Impressions, and diabolical Illusions, I. 224. A supernatural Proof of it often added to the Person inspir'd, I. 224.
Instinct, II. 637, 653, 694, 701. III. 238.
 — Parental, II. 638. — in Birds, II. 692. — in providing Habitations, II. 646. — in Incubation, II. 655.
Institutions, Christian, necessary to be observ'd, II. 561.
 — Practical, which have generally prevail'd in the World, III. 55.
Intelligence, a Principle peculiar to Man, III. 238.
 Spinoza's Notion of it unphilosophical, III. 328.
 Its Existence, whence, III. 328. Three ways of accounting for it, III. 328. — First, By supposing it essential to Matter, refuted, III. 329. or — Secondly, The Result of Figure and Motion, refuted, III. 331, 332. — Thirdly, Therefore it proceeds from a Principle distinct from Matter, III. 333. Mr. Locke adds a Fourth way, II. 242. of no service to the Atheist, III. 329.
Intercostal Muscles, II. 618.
Interpretation of Scripture, Three Rules for our Security therein, III. 767. — First, To keep the Analogy of the Faith, III. 767. — Secondly, Not to make the mystical Sense exclude the literal, III. 767. — Thirdly, Not to lay stress on a single Type, III. 767.
Invention, II. 659. Its compass, II. 659.
Job, II. 661.
 JOHN, St. I. 580. His Second and Third Epistles, not material whether wrote by him or no, I. 556. — were admitted into the Canon, II. 753.
 JOHN Baptist, the Promise of Elias fulfilled in him, III. 715.
 See *Harbinger*. — Not to be Elijah the Tishbite, III. 719. but he had this Name from some Resemblance of him in his Life and Doctrine, III. 719. He obviated the reigning Prejudices of the Times, III. 719. — gave Notice of Christ's coming, III. 720. The Difference between John Baptist and the former Prophets, III. 720.
 Two Objections against his being the Messiah's Harbinger remov'd, III. 721.
Joints, II. 621.
 JOSEPH to be exalted above his Parents and Brethren, II. 307. — his Prediction, III. 102.
Iron in the Forest of Dean, H. 585.
 The Improvements of all Arts owing to it, III. 197.
Irreligion, of three sorts, I. 320. Their several Consequences, I. 321. That Men are all equal, I. 322. and that every one may act, as he shall judge most convenient for his own Happiness, I. 323.
 (9 X) The

Vol. III.

- The Grounds and Pretences of it, I. 328. — how far capable of Proof, I. 328. The usual Methods of defending it, I. 329. — by Ridicule, I. 330. — by requiring Mathematical Proof of Religion, I. 330. — by New Schemes and Hypotheses, I. 331. — by raising loose Objections, I. 333. — the chief of them answer'd, I. 333. The different Grounds of it and Religion, I. 336. The Causes of Irreligion, I. 339.
- ISHMAEL (see ABRAHAM) his Expulsion consider'd, III. 639. A distinction necessary to be kept up in his Family from that of Isaac, III. 536.
- ISLANDS, why warmer than the Continents, II. 579.
- ISRAEL, the Children of. See *Prophecy*. — The Credibility of the History of them and their Afflictions, III. 537. The Ends of their Affliction, *Id. ibid.* Their Affliction proper for the Preservation of the true Religion, *Id. ibid.* and to prepare their Minds for their Removal into Canaan, *Id. ibid.* The Reason of their going through the Wilderness, and continuing there so long, III. 540. The Use of their being in the Wilderness so long, III. 544. The Reason of God's bringing them into Canaan in that terrible Manner, III. 545.
- JUDAH, a constant Preference given to the Tribe of Judah, III. 647. A Continuation of it promis'd, till Shiloh should come, III. 647. This shewn from Isaiah's Prediction of the Birth of Immanuel, III. 648. This made them not believe the Predictions of their Captivity, III. 648. The Prophets guarded against this by express Promises of Restoration, III. 649. and by keeping the End and Expectation of their Oeconomy in view, III. 649.
- [The gathering of the People] (Israel) by some understood to be of them to Judah, but more agreeable to the ancient Versions of all Nations, to the Messiah, III. 649.
- JUDE, St. his Epistle Canonical, II. 753.
- JUDGMENT, above the Power of mere Matter, II. 240. — *Private*. See *Free-thinking*. — Every one to judge for himself, I. 250. This allow'd to every one, II. 804. No Authority but over itself, II. 804. Liberty of it does not make all Guides in Religion useless, II. 807. To be employ'd upon such Subjects as we are most capable of being Matters of, II. 808. by virtue of it, every private Man not to be a Disputant, II. 810. It is sometimes to be regulated by the Judgment of others, II. 811. Objections against it answer'd, II. 813. — First, That it causeth different Religions, II. 813. — Secondly, That it may lead to a Disbelief of Fundamentals, II. 817. — Thirdly, That it puts all Religions upon a Level, II. 818. — Fourthly, That it will confound Moral Good and Evil, II. 819. — Fifthly, That it will be the Occasion of much Pride, II. 819. The Advantages of it, II. 821. — It prevents Infidelity, and promotes Natural Religion, II. 821. It causes Constancy and Steadfastness in the true Religion, II. 824. — It lays a Foundation for mutual Charity, II. 826. — is recommended by the Fathers, II. 835.
- JUDGMENT, this Life not a Time for it, III. 269. The true Uses to be made of Temporal Judgments, III. 270. The Day of Judgment, and Judge, credible, II. 155.
- JULIAN, an Objection of his to the Christian Religion, I. 9. His Method of opposing Christianity, III. 377.
- JUSTICE and Malice different, II. 437. Instances of it in Zaleucus and Saul, II. 533.
- JUSTICE and Equity universal, II. 89. A general Rule of Justice and Equity, III. 447. Justice essential to the Divine Nature, III. 88. — God's Justice consider'd, I. 455. — twofold, II. 369. The Necessity of a vindictive Justice in God, II. 379. Objections against God's Justice answer'd, II. 246. How satisfied on Man's first Transgression, II. 534.
- K. — Knowledge, a different Kind from that of the Senses, I. 369. — Human, different degrees of it, I. 751. — its Perfection, I. 442. — of Divine Things, how attainable, I. 155. — Natural, what, I. 155. II. 85. Three Classes of the Objects of our Knowledge, I. 157. Knowledge of God, Natural and Moral, what, III. 259. — perfect, III. 415. God cannot act or will any thing contrary to it, III. 417. God foreknew all the Acts of his Creatures, III. 423. Objections to this Attribute answer'd, II. 244. See *Foreknowledge*.
- L. — *Abbeys*, II. 636. — *Lakes*, II. 642. LAMBETH, the Import of his Speech upon the Birth of Noah, III. 621. Language, the Necessity of it, III. 429. A Revelation necessary concerning it, III. 459. Languages, the Reason of the Confusion of them, III. 526. The Gift of them, a Proof of the divine Revelation of the Gospel, III. 496.
- LAW — First, of Nature, III. 403. — what, III. 444. — how discoverable, III. 431. — founded in the Relation between God and Man, III. 28. — Eternal, III. 90. Universal and absolutely unchangeable, II. 94. Obligatory, antecedent to all Consideration of particular Rewards and Punishments, II. 97. — yet a good Man may have respect to them, II. 98. — Two sorts, *Primary*, III. 443. and *Secondary*, III. 450. The Laws of Nature, III. 445. Two general Laws of it, III. 445. All Particulars comprehended in these, III. 445. This shewn by reducing them to their several Heads, III. 445. These Laws the Foundation of Right and Wrong, III. 452. Motives to enforce the Laws of Nature, III. 453. The Law of Nature the Law of God, II. 503.
- LAW of Nature (or of God) was explain'd by our Saviour, I. 456. He made it the Rule of his Life, I. 457. — Secondly, *Jewish*. — The Design of it, I. 702. The Wisdom of it, III. 541. The Jews Obligations to read it, III. 545. Why temporal Blessings were made the express Encouragement for Obedience to it, I. 702. 1st, *Moral*, III. 723. That the Messiah should, and that our Jesus did, exalt it, I. 672. The Impracticableness of it arises not from the Nature of the Law, but from the Frailty of Man, III. 744. 2dly, *Ceremonial*, III. 723. Pure Obedience to the Will of God the only Recommendation of it, I. 674. Why God did so severely punish the Breach of this Law, I. 677. This Law a peculiar Distinction of the Jews, I. 681. — more particularly pointed out our Redemption, III. 724. Legal Rites distinguished into ordinary and occasional, III. 736. Ritual Precepts not immutable, III. 739. 3dly, *Judicial*, III. 723. Sometimes one Law partook of every Kind, III. 724. — *Typical Sense* of it, III. 758. The Grounds of this Interpretation of the Law, I. 759. — First, From the Usage of other Nations, III. 759. — Secondly, From the Nature of the Jewish Discipline, III. 763. — Thirdly, From the uniform View which the Mosaic Law has upon the Christian Exposition, III. 764. Three Objections against this Method of Interpretation, answer'd, III. 765. — 1st, Of its being obscure, III. 765. — 2dly, Of its being arbitrary, III. 766. — 3dly, Of its being inconsistent, III. 767. The Aptness and Significancy of the typical Interpretation of the Law, III. 769. Which appears in the main Ceremonies of it, III. 769. This was intimated by Moses veiling his Countenance, III. 770. A mystical Meaning acknowledg'd by the Jews, III. 771. This refer'd to by Christ, III. 771. Typical of the Messiah and the Gospel State, I. 682. Three Instances of it — 1st, In the Tabernacle, III. 771. — 2dly, In the Method of Worshipping by Sacrifice, III. 775. — 3dly, In the Administration of the Legal Worship, III. 778. who fore-shew'd Christ — in Purity of Descent, III. 779. — in unblemish'd Perfection, III. 779. — in the Rites of Consecration, III. 779. — All of it not perpetual, I. 94. III. 730. — not to the Jews themselves, III. 744. because insufficient for the Justification of Sinners, I. 687. — design'd to cease, I. 689. This sufficiently intimated to the Jews, I. 689. by the Pattern and Frame of the Tabernacle, and the Ministry ordain'd for it, I. 689. by the Promise of a Messiah, I. 689. by the Inefficacy of the Legal Sacrifices, I. 690. by the Promise of a new Covenant, I. 690. by the Predictions of the Calling of the Gentiles, I. 690. by the Destruction of the Temple, and their Dispersion, I. 690. The Arguments from Reason for its Perpetuity, consider'd, III. 730. The Scriptural Arguments for it, consider'd, III. 732. — The

— The *Abolition* of the Law, argued — 1st, From the Nature of the Legal Precepts, III. 738. — 2dly, From their inward and spiritual Meaning, III. 740. — 3dly, From their being peculiarly adapted for the People and Land of Canaan, III. 741. — 4thly, From the express Prediction, that some of the principal Mosaic Rites were to be abolish'd, III. 746. and from the Tradition of the Rabbins, III. 751. — 5thly, From the express mention of a New Law to be given by the Messiah, III. 754. — 6thly, From the Tendency of Mosaic Rites to prefigure Gospel Benefits, III. 758. Its Abrogation for the Glory of God and the Good of Mankind, I. 814.

The Examples of our Saviour and his Apostles observing the Law of Moses, not inconsistent with the Christian Doctrine of its Expiration, I. 691. The Predictions of Moses and the Prophets, no Proof of its Perpetuity, I. 692. nor of its present or future Obligation, I. 692.

The Law only pointed to those Benefits which the Gospel effected, III. 727. not preach'd down by Jesus, I. 93. not destroy'd, but establish'd by the Gospel, I. 669.

The Law and the Gospel, the Antithesis between them explain'd, III. 722. — 1st, In the Titles or Characters of both, III. 723. — 2dly, As to the Method of Dispensation, III. 727. — 3dly, As to the Authors and Promulgers of both, III. 727.

Law, how one excels another, I. 673.

Law particular, to which the original Constitutions of Things upon the Earth are subject, III. 184.

Laws, Religion necessary for their Establishment, III. 100.

Learning, its several Periods, II. 663.

Leaves, II. 715.

Levity, not positive, but owing to Gravity, II. 573.

Liberty (see Power) is not a contradictory Notion, II. 32.

Hobbes's and Spinoza's Arguments against the Possibility of it, answer'd, II. 39.

— possible, tho' Thinking and Willing were Affections of Matter, II. 42. The Necessity of the Will's being determin'd by the last Judgment of the Understanding, not inconsistent with Liberty, II. 43. nor the Certainty of the Divine Foreknowledge, II. 45. The Necessity of God's Moral Attributes, consistent with perfect Liberty, II. 51. Liberty a Perfection, II. 53.

— natural, not excluded by the highest Perfection of rational Creatures, II. 53.

— human, what, I. 283. Wherein it consists, III. 236. Consider'd as a Perfection, I. 443. and as an Imperfection, I. 443.

Lice, II. 704.

Lie, Religious, the Heinousness of it, I. 577.

Life, (see Immortality) what, I. 546. The Notion of it explain'd, III. 413. The Perfections of it, III. 413.

Life and Power the same thing, III. 413.

— human, how it ought to be, I. 316. The present State of it, I. 319. The Length and Brevity of it, what owing to, II. 626.

— present, not the Time for Judgment, III. 269.

Life Eternal, what, I. 547. II. 550. Certainly known only by Revelation, II. 549. An Article of Christian Faith, II. 550. The Ground of the Christian Faith and Hope of it, II. 551. the Holy Scriptures, *Id. ibid.* as reveal'd by God, II. 552. who cannot lie, II. 553. and upon the Principles of Reason, II. 553. — from the Nature of Things, II. 553. — of God, II. 554. — of Man, *Id. ibid.*

Light, what, II. 570. Its Necessity and Use, II. 570. Its Velocity, II. 571. Its vast Expansion and Extent, II. 571.

Light of Nature, or Natural Reason, how far sufficient to teach Men their Duty, III. 261. — improv'd by Revelation, III. 262. The Defects of it to answer the Purposes of Religion, III. 598. — 1st, As to the Instances and Measures of our Duty, III. 599. — 2dly, As to the Origin of Evil, III. 600. — 3dly, As to the Assurance of Pardon, III. 602. — 4thly, As to the Motives to Obedience, III. 603.

Lightning, whence, II. 568.

Likeness of Men, II. 676.

LINUS, when he lived, I. 171.

Lion, his Strength, II. 680.

Loadstone, II. 663.

Longevity, the Reason of its Difference in Man, II. 625.

LOPEZ, GREGORY, I. 245.

Love of one another, how a New Commandment, I. 128.

LUKE, St. his Qualifications as a Writer of the New Testa-

ment, II. 749. His Gospel allow'd of by some Apostle, III. 394.

Lungs, II. 616, 618. Their Vesiculæ, whether musculous, II. 618.

Lusts, Men under the Dominion of them, not to be convinc'd by the Evidence of Religion, II. 194.

LYCAONIAN Language, I. 56.

LYCURGUS (see Theft) his last Act to make his Laws perpetual, III. 354.

M.

MACHIAVEL, why he denied the Truth of Scripture Miracles, I. 364.

Maggot, long-tail'd, II. 653.

Magians, their Notions, III. 159.

Magicians, Egyptian, (see Miracle) an Account of two of their Wonders, III. 362.

Magistrates infected with Atheism, I. 10.

Magnet, II. 663.

MAHOMET, his Religion an Imposture, II. 416.

Male. The first Child a Male, III. 457.

Male and Female, one of each made at first, III. 430.

An equal Number of them to be continu'd, III. 432.

In a State of pure Nature, a regular Succession of them, III. 457.

Males, more of them born than Females, II. 627. III. 433.

The Necessity of their bearing Proportion to each other, III. 429.

Malice, II. 447. Justice and Malice different, II. 437.

Man, Mankind. — A Survey of him, II. 658. His Soul, II. 486, 658. His Body, II. 486, 666. — its Posture, II. 666. III. 71. — its Figure, II. 668. — its Size, *Id. ib.* — the Structure of its Parts, II. 670. (Men of unusual Strength, II. 669.) — The placing of them, II. 671. for the Prevention of Evil, II. 672. The Consent of its Parts, whence, II. 674. Variety of Mens Faces, Voices, and Hand-writing, II. 676.

— First, *Production*, according to the Atheistical Account, I. 26. — 1st, By infinite Succession — refuted from Reason and Matter of Fact, I. 27, &c. — 2dly, The Astrological Explication of their Origin, refuted, I. 29. — 3dly, By Mechanism and Necessity, refuted, I. 32, &c. — 4thly, By mere Chance and Fortune, refuted, I. 42, &c. Their Origin, according to Plato, III. 43. from one Stock, &c. a general Opinion, III. 54. The Reveald Account of Man, II. 434, 435. III. 261. — The Atheistical, II. 435. The Insufficiency of it, II. 486. Man has not been from Eternity, II. 485. nor was he form'd in Time out of self-existing Matter, by the casual Concourse of its Parts, II. 485.

Man born the most helpless of any, II. 639. Why born naked, II. 642. The Balance of Mankind, II. 625. The Increase of it, II. 625. Their Age in all Ages of the World, II. 625.

— Secondly, *Nature*. — Man defin'd, I. 76. His Nature consider'd, I. 283, 442. His distinct Power and Faculties, III. 234. The Subordination of his inferior Powers and Appetites to his Reason, necessary to his Happiness, III. 429. The Consideration of him as a Compound Creature, II. 486. III. 241. The Obligation that arises from hence to the Practice of Morality, III. 241.

— Man consider'd, (1.) As a *Rational* Creature, III. 428. Distinguish'd from subordinate Creatures by his outward Structure, III. 71. and by his Speech, III. 72. The Objections of Man's being made a Rational Creature, answer'd, III. 251. Man fallible, I. 253. Man only happy, as acting by Reason, III. 433. The Powers of his Mind free, III. 73. His Wisdom, *Id. ibid.* His Goodness, III. 74.

(2.) As a *Sociable* Creature, III. 424, 429, 434.

(3.) As a *Religious* Creature. — The Image of God in him, I. 455. His Mind and Reason related to something above him, III. 72. Man oblig'd to enquire after the Will of God, III. 88, 92. His Relation to God, I. 285. His Obligation to God, I. 308. Supposing no God — all Men equal, I. 322. and may act as every one shall judge most convenient for his own Happiness, I. 323. His Advantages above the irreligious Man, I. 327. — Their different Conduct, I. 336. Man accountable, according to his various Circumstances, at the last Day, I. 523.

— Thirdly, *State*. — Man made perfect, III. 423. Where plac'd in the Scale of created Beings, I. 60, 752. III. 71.

- III. 71. His Complaints, that he lies under greater Disadvantages than other Creatures, unjust, III. 73. Whether all Things made for Man, II. 591. His Right and Dominion over subordinate Creatures, III. 71, 204, 433. — has none to abuse them, III. 204.
- (1.) Of *Innocence*, I. 696. — whence Man is capable of committing Sin — by abusing his Liberty, III. 249. — This confirm'd by Scripture, III. 250. and agreeable to every one's own Experience, III. 251. What the Consequence would have been, if he had acted right in his State of Trial, I. 443.
- (2.) Of *Guilt*, I. 697. — An Account of his first Transgression, II. 532. The Justice and Mercy of God reconcil'd in this Affair, II. 533.
- Man fallen* (see *Fall*, *Ignorance*) degenerated into a gross Ignorance of God — of his Duties — and of himself, I. 465. His Necessities, See *Mediator*. His Stature not diminish'd, I. 38. Whence subject to Death, III. 200. and to so many Diseases, III. 201. and to Pain, III. 202.
- (3.) Of *Reconciliation*, I. 697. Man's true End and Happiness, III. 442. — how to be attain'd, III. 444.
- Man* more particularly proves a God, III. 67.
- Manichæans*, their Notions, III. 160.
- MARCUS (Emperor) his Notion of Providence, I. 4.
- MARK, (St.) St. Peter suppos'd to be the Author of his Gospel, I. 575. or it was allow'd of by some Apostle, III. 394. His Qualifications as a Writer of the New Testament, II. 749.
- Marriage*, a Revelation necessary concerning it, III. 456. The Christian Precepts which relate to it, I. 477, 478. The proper Method for the Multiplication of our Kind, III. 449. The Proportion which Marriages bear to Births, II. 626.
- Mastication*, II. 634.
- Matter*. Spinoza's new Notion of it confuted, III. 300. A true Notion of it, I. 16, 34. All Atheists agree, that it is Eternal, II. 224. Not from Eternity, I. 60, 296. II. 209, 225. Not necessarily existent, I. 60. Not self-existent, III. 410. Not coeternal with God, I. 301. Supposing it Eternal, will not supersede the Necessity of believing a God, II. 225. Not Immutable, III. 301. How possible to be produc'd out of Nothing, I. 60. See *Creation*. Nothing substantial in the World, but Matter, refuted, I. 396. III. 295. Toland's Proof of its Activity, III. 315. — 1st, Because Motion is necessarily included in our Idea of Matter, III. 315. (Refuted, because our Idea of Matter without Motion is compleat, III. 316. even according to Bayle, *Id. ibid.*) — This he proves, (1.) from the Idea of its Divisibility, III. 317. — (2.) From our Idea of some Qualities in it, which necessarily suppose Motion, refuted, III. 317. 2dly, Because in fact all Matter is in Motion, refuted, III. 318. Toland's Opinion, of Motion being essential to it, confuted, II. 12. Motion not necessary to it, I. 297. Its Diversity owing to Motion, III. 318. Exceptions against God's being the Mover of it, III. 323. An immaterial Being may act upon Matter, *Id. ibid.* The Quantity of Matter in the World, cannot be called Evil, III. 173.
- The Powers of it, III. 173. The Imperfection of those Laws of Motion to which Matter is subject, III. 173. Cannot produce Perception, I. 15, 17, 19. III. 303. Thinking and Willing not Affections of it, II. 40. Cogitation not essential to it, II. 237. The Motion of the finer Parts of it not the original Cause of Understanding, II. 239. Intelligence not essential to it, I. 402. III. 329. — 1st, Because not the same with Extension, nor a Mode of it, III. 329. does not arise from Figure and Motion, III. 331. — We conceive a Difference between them, *Id. ibid.* — 2dly, Because Unity of Thought cannot arise from Matter, III. 333. Spinoza's groundless Scheme of it, II. 337. III. 334. either in single Atoms, or from Matter compounded, *Id. ibid.* — 3dly, Prov'd from our Consciousness, III. 336. See *Individuation*.
- Matter and Mind*, their Nature and Distinction, I. 300.
- Matter and Spirit*, their Distinction, I. 387, 396.
- MATTHEW, St. his Gospel, in what Language wrote, III. 392. — in Hebrew, I. 146, 152. Used by the Ebionites and Nazarenes, III. 392.
- Meats*, the Jewish Difference of them to be abolish'd, III. 752.
- Mediation of Christ*, what, III. 485. The End of it, II. 377. Christian Worship thro' it, III. 483.
- Mediator*. What the Office of the Mediator is, I. 451, 452. One between God and Man, not unreasonable to believe, II. 151. The Necessity of one, from the Opinion of all Mankind, III. 483. Christ sustain'd that Character between God and Man, I. 451. An Objection from the Dignity of the Person of our Mediator, answer'd, II. 151. The Persons under the Law, who were Types of the Messiah, a sort of Mediators between God and Man, I. 451. That there should be a Mediator, in order to reconcile fallen Man to his Maker, agreeable to the Nature of God, I. 452. — This prov'd — 1st, From the ancient Philosophers, I. 452. (Whence they had this Notion, I. 452.) — 2dly, From a Contemplation of the Perfection of the Divine Nature, and the Imperfection of the Human, I. 452. This Method of Reconciliation between Men, the most reasonable way of proceeding, I. 453. and therefore between God and Men, I. 453. The Difference between these two Methods, I. 453. The particular Way how our Saviour executed this Office, I. 454. — 1st, By satisfying God's Holiness and Justice, I. 454, 455. This was done by Him, by publishing the Law of God, I. 456. and by complying fully with it in his own Person, I. 457. and in the highest Degree by his Sufferings, I. 457. The Dignity of the Person who transacted this Affair, adding Weight to the whole, I. 458. 2dly, By providing for the Necessities of Men, I. 458. by removing — (1.) Their guilty Fears, I. 462. (2.) Their gross Ignorance of God, I. 465. by his Doctrine, I. 466. (see *Christ's Doctrine*) and Example, I. 481. See *Life of Jesus*.
- 3dly, By making a farther Provision for their Indisposition and Inability, I. 504. — by the most powerful Motives to Obedience, I. 505. — by promising the Assistance of the Divine Spirit, I. 507. — by appointing certain Institutions in his Church, as Means of Grace, I. 509. 4thly, By providing compleat Salvation for Sinners, I. 511.
- MELCHISEDEC, his Order explain'd, III. 556.
- Memory* does not proceed from subtle Matter, II. 239. Remarkable Instances of it, II. 659.
- Mercury* (Planet) how Animals can live there, explain'd, I. 79.
- MESSIAH. See *Law Moral*, SAVIOUR. — A wild Conceit of some Infidels, that the Notion of a Messiah was not contain'd in the ancient Scriptures, III. 607. Jewish Notion of Him, *Id. ibid.* He was prefigured by the Law, III. 761, 770. — First, *Prediction*. — Ancient Predictions of Him deliver'd in divers Manners, III. 609. — at sundry Times, gradually, III. 610. Notices of Him — in the first Period of the World, III. 611. — in the second Period of the World, III. 626. This divided by St. Matthew into three *Intervals*, III. 633. upon the Account of the Alteration — of the State of Government — and of Prophecy, III. 634. See ABRAHAM.
- (1.) *Interval* — Shiloh, a Name of the Messiah, III. 646. See *Shiloh*. — His Descent promis'd to the Tribe of Judah, III. 646. This allow'd by the Modern Jews — and by the Ancient, III. 646. Hence a Preference given to that Tribe, III. 647. Two remarkable Predictions of Him, during the Israelites Journey in the Wilderness, III. 653.
- (2.) *Interval*, III. 661. — The various Prophecies of the Messiah under it, III. 662. Why this Interval begins with the Reign of David, III. 662.
- (3.) *Interval*, III. 667. — The Prophecies of Him under it, III. 699. Those of Daniel and Haggai foretold His Coming before the utter overthrow of the Jewish Temple and Polity, III. 700. Prophecies of Him faithfully fulfill'd, and applied to Jesus, I. 723. See *Prophecy*.
- Secondly, *His Character*. — The Desire of all Nations, III. 705. The Messiah prophesied of under the Character of — 1st, a *Prophet*, I. 712. — like unto Moses, III. 755. — was to extend his Precepts unto all Nations, III. 755. 2dly, A *Priest*, I. 712. — was to be a Priest, III. 749. Spoken of in Scripture as a divine Person, II. 524. 3dly, A *King*, I. 712. (and of *Nagid*, III. 709.) His Kingdom prefigur'd under that of David and Solomon, III. 662. The Accession of the Gentiles to his Kingdom both typically and literally foretold, III. 667. His Regal Character explain'd, III. 661. He was to give a new Law, III. 754. — His

— *His Suffering State.* — His twofold Estate of Suffering and Glory foretold, III. 691. The Jews generally overlook'd the former, and attended to the latter, *Id. ibid.* As did also the Disciples of Christ, till after the Resurrection, III. 692. The Sum of Isaiah's Prophecy, in relation to his Suffering State, III. 692. Unity of Character confines this Prediction to one Subject, III. 692. which could not be the Nation of the Jews, *Id. ibid.* nor King Josiah, III. 693. nor the Prophet Jeremy, *Id. ib.* but the Messiah, III. 694. The Jews Notion of two Messiahs, groundless, III. 694. The Jews not agreed about the Office of the Suffering Messiah, III. 695. nor is their Notion agreeable to this Prophecy of Isaiah, *Id. ibid.* but the Christian Interpretation is consistent with it, *Id. ibid.* 1st, That the Messiah should voluntarily yield himself to Sufferings, *Id. ibid.* — 2dly, That these Sufferings should make an Atonement for Sin, III. 696. [An Objection from St. Matthew's Application of this Prophecy, remov'd, III. 697.] — 3dly, His Sufferings should be previous to his State of Exaltation, III. 697.

— *Thirdly, His Coming.* — He was to arise from the Seed of David, II. 333, 340. The Time of his Coming settled by Daniel in the Fourth Monarchy, III. 707. and within Seventy Weeks, III. 708. A Calculation of the Time, forbidden by the Jews, III. 713. His Coming not delay'd on account of the Peoples Sins, *Id. ibid.* — neither did He conceal himself from them, *Id. ibid.* An Harbinger before Him, foretold by Isaiah and Malachi, III. 715. He came when He was expected, I. 722. The Ends of his Coming, I. 815. The Meanness of the Figure He made on Earth, a Stumbling-block to the Jews, but no Exception against Him, I. 815.

Messiahship, the Ends of it — to restore corrupt Man to the Image and Favour of God, II. 536. — To give the highest Glory to God, II. 538. and to lay the greatest Obligations upon Men to love and serve God, II. 539.

Metals grow, II. 585. Their Use, I. 85.

Mice, II. 582. Their Hair, II. 643. *Field-Mice*, II. 640.

Mind (see *Matter*) its Faculties and Powers, III. 236. — general, II. 480.

Minerals and *Metals* grow, II. 585.

Ministers of Religion, most useful Members of Society, II. 440. Our Obligations to them, II. 454.

Miracle. — First, *Definition and Distinction* — what, I. 44. II. 517. III. 116. How to define and distinguish them, II. 161. III. 120. The Marks of those that are from God, III. 121. How to distinguish those of God from the Wonders of evil Spirits, II. 164. The true Definition of a Miracle, II. 165.

— Secondly, *Nature.* — What necessary to make a Miracle true and significant, III. 116. That it be an Effect obvious to the Senses, *Id. ibid.* and supernatural in respect of human Power, tho' it be not the immediate Power of God, III. 117. and that it be the Sign of somewhat, III. 118. Not to be perform'd by any Agent inferior to God, III. 361. Those of the Egyptian Magicians, not real, III. 362. Those of evil Spirits not mere Delusions, II. 164. The counterfeit Miracles of the sixth and following Centuries, no reason for suspecting the Gospel-Miracles, III. 388. Of the pretended Miracles of Apollonius and others, II. 166. Two sorts of Miracles, II. 219. Miracles destroy not the Use of Reason, II. 860.

— Thirdly, *Possibility*, III. 119. — prov'd, III. 359. Miracles may be prov'd as other Matters of fact, III. 119. The Power of working them, II. 161. In respect of the Power of God, all things are alike easy, II. 161. The unreasonableness of denying the Possibility of them, II. 163.

— Fourthly, *Proof* — of the Being of a God, II. 218. The Marks of those that are from God, or done by his Commission, III. 121. — 1st, Their Greatness, *Id. ibid.* — 2dly, Their Number, *Id. ibid.* — 3dly, Their long Continuance, *Id. ibid.* — 4thly, Their Goodness, III. 122. — 5thly, The Thing prov'd by them to be worthy of God, *Id. ibid.* — 6thly, The Issue, III. 123. What Connection between divine Miracles and a divine Commission, III. 124. Miracles necessary for the Proof of a Revelation, III. 471, 481. Ancient Miracles, how far an Evidence of the Doctrine of Scripture, III. 129. How far Miracles are of use in expounding Prophecy, I. 610. Miracles a Proof of Revelation, I. 158, 205. The Abundance of them would weaken this Proof, I. 618. Miracles a sufficient Proof of a Divine Mission, I. 92, 94.

VOL. III.

III. 359. New ones unsuccessful upon those who have not been convinc'd by a standing Revelation, I. 619. The Proof of the Miracles by the Doctrine, and the Doctrine by the Miracles, not a circular Proof, II. 166.

— Fifthly, *Gospel-Miracles*, III. 388. — Christian Revelation attended with the Power of Miracles, III. 495. Miracles a Proof of the Gospel, II. 517.

— *Miracles of our Saviour* different from the Wonders of Demons, I. 8. Were no Effects of any Laws of Nature unknown to Men, — 1st, Because no Reason can be given, why no more of them are produc'd, III. 360. — 2dly, Supposing them so, how could our Saviour know them, III. 361.

— Greater than those of Moses, I. 92, 638. (why, I. 603.) — in Number, I. 639. — in Excellence, *Id. ib.* being done with greater Power and more Goodness, I. 640. (— for the Benefit of Mankind, I. 8. — useful to Men, II. 518.) [Miracles done in honour of Jesus, greater than those done in honour of Moses, I. 641.] — in a more public Manner, I. 642. and with greater Authority, I. 642. Jewish Objections against all this, refuted, I. 645.

— Believ'd by the Jews, I. 649. Why not wrought by our Saviour in his own Country, I. 54. Their necessary Condition, I. 54. An Evidence of his divine Commission, II. 161. The Strength and Evidence of them, II. 165.

— A Proof of his Messiahship, II. 517. as was the Number and Greatness of them, II. 517.

— *Miracles of the Apostles*, exceed those of Moses and the Prophets, I. 649. The Apostles Testimony concerning the Gospel-Miracles not to be suspected, III. 384.

Misery, its Influence on human Actions, I. 306.

— *Everlasting*, founded in Nature, III. 464.

Misfortunes of good Men, whence, III. 312.

Mistletoe, II. 717.

Mission (see *Miracle*) Divine, how known, I. 158. II. 742. See *Predictions*.

Moabites prefigure the Enemies of the Church of Christ, III. 659.

Mode, what, III. 413.

Moderation, III. 445, 446.

Moisture necessary to the producing of Vegetables, III. 188.

Mole, II. 563, 580, 597, 635, 638, 680, 682. His Ears, II. 605. His Feet, II. 679.

Mole-Cricket, II. 648, 699, 706.

Monster, what, I. 46. Whence they proceed, III. 202.

Moral Differences of Things. See *Differences*.

Moral Service prefer'd to Ritual, I. 674.

— *Duties* of the Gospel, practicable, I. 821.

Morality, what degree of Evidence for the Maxims of it, I. 309. No perfect Morality, where the first Principles of Religion are not entertain'd, III. 24. not between Man and Man, III. 26. because human Actions depend upon Belief, III. 26. and moral Actions still more, III. 37. Morality must respect God, III. 28. The Obligations of the Heathen to the Duties of it, III. 242. Wherein their Morality was deficient, III. 245. The Manner in which the Duties of it are recommended by Revelation, III. 246.

Mortality. See *Sin*.

Mortification absolutely necessary, I. 477.

Moses, I. 433. his Character, I. 181. — as an Historian, I. 653. How different from that of the Evangelists, I. 654. Inspir'd as an Historian, as well as a Lawgiver, III. 585. His Books worthy of Belief, I. 101. The Credibility of his History, whence, III. 503, 512. & *passim*. Why his Miracles superior to those of any ancient Prophet, I. 638. (See *Miracle*.) A great Prophet to be rais'd, like unto him, II. 327. (See *Prophecy*, and *Prophet*.) Christ compar'd with him, III. 655. (See *CHRIST*.) The Difference of their Ministry, III. 727.

Moths, II. 629. Their Colours, II. 700.

Motion. See *ZENO*, *World*. — The three possible Ways of accounting for it, III. 315. — 1st, From an infinite Succession of Impulses, refuted, *Id. ibid.* — 2dly, From an active Principle in Matter, refuted, *Id. ibid.* or its being essential to it, refuted, III. 319. — 1. Because there could be no Bodies or Concretions of Matter, III. 319. — 2. Because there could be no Variation as to the Quantity of Motion, III. 319. — 3. Because Bodies of equal Bulk weigh unequally, III. 321. Objections against God's being

(9 Y)

- being the Author of Motion, refuted, III. 323. Motion of Matter not Eternal, I. 62. Motion something added to Matter, I. 300. The Hypothesis of a certain Quantity of it at first impress'd on Matter, false, III. 320. How Matter acts upon Matter, difficult to be conceiv'd, III. 324. The Imperfection of those Laws of Motion which Matter is subject to, III. 173. 3dly, There is some Being distinct from Matter, that is the Cause of its Motion, III. 320, 323. How it came into Matter, I. 397. Not essential to Matter, I. 398. II. 232. III. 177.
- *Spontaneous*, not to be accounted for, but by a Principle superior to Matter, II. 240. Thought does not arise from Figure and Motion, III. 331, 332. Motion of Matter cannot produce Understanding, III. 237. Motion incapable of producing Perception, I. 17, 18.
- *Perpetual*, II. 661.
- Motion of Animals*. See *Animals*.
- Motives* proper to influence free Agents, III. 247. — Suppose some Law, III. 248.
- Motives to Obedience, defective by natural Light, III. 603.
- *Scripture*, or *Gospel*, how to be consider'd, I. 546. See *Scripture*, and *Christian Religion*.
- Motives to Infidelity, III. 287. See *Infidelity*.
- Movers*, Self, — Particular, consistent with an Universal Mover, III. 324. — their Existence possible, III. 325.
- Mountains*, their Use, I. 85. II. 642. III. 187.
- Mountains and Vallies*, their Beauty and Uses — to Preservation or Restoration of Health, II. 588. — for commodious Habitation, II. 589. — for the Production of various Vegetables, *Id. ibid.* — for the Harbour, &c. of various Animals, *Id. ibid.* — for the Generation of Minerals and Metals, *Id. ibid.* Necessary for the Rise of Fountains, and Conveyance of Rivers, II. 590. A special Mark of God's Providence, II. 591.
- Mouth*, II. 632.
- Mud-suckers*, their Legs and Feet, II. 689.
- Multiplication* of our Kind, how to be regulated, III. 449.
- by Marriage, *Id. ibid.*
- Murder*, Self, the Unlawfulness of it, II. 93.
- of Self, or Others, unlawful, III. 447, 524.
- Muscle*, Triangular, its Use, II. 618.
- Muscles*, II. 620, 622, 670, 672.
- Equilibration of those of the Eye, II. 598.
- *Pectoral*, II. 688.
- Music*, by whom invented, II. 660. Its Effects, II. 612.
- Mustard-seed*, II. 716.
- Mutability*, inconsistent with necessary Existence, III. 302.
- Mystery*, the Scripture Sense of the Word, III. 233.
- Mysteries*, Natural, I. 600, 751. II. 18.
- Mysteries of the Gospel*, in what Sense they exceed our Comprehension, I. 740. This no Bar to our Belief of them, I. 743. Objections to this, I. 749. — answer'd, I. 750. Not the Invention of Priests, I. 758. The Objection, taken from the Offence given to our Enemies by requiring Assent to them, answer'd, I. 759. — their Use, I. 819, 820.
- Mystical Sense* of Scripture (allow'd by the Jews, I. 148.) does not destroy the Literal, I. 119.
- N.
- N**AILS, their Usefulness, I. 47.
- Nations*, the Reason of their Dispersion, III. 526.
- what happen'd after it, III. 527. Almost all Nations deduce their Original from some God, III. 54.
- Nature* (see *State*) the different Meanings of it, II. 212, 228. What meant by it in Scripture, II. 844. — by the Heathens, III. 245. Abuse of the Word *Nature*, III. 76, 119. The Powers of it the immediate Effect of God, II. 162. The Course of it, what, II. 162. Its Laws by divine Sanction, I. 36.
- *Plastic*, what, II. 229.
- of *Things*, the Rule of God's Operations, III. 434.
- How far alter'd in a State of Corruption, III. 461.
- Nature*, Human, its Excellency and Dignity, I. 442.
- God's Method in Scripture of purifying and perfecting it, I. 200.
- Its Corruption (or Depravation) what, II. 841.
- The Origin of it, II. 841. III. 507. [The wisest Men not able to assign the Cause of it, III. 507. or to find sufficient Means of recovering out of it, III. 103. The Cure of it beyond human Power, III. 104. Philosophy not sufficient for this, *Id. ibid.*] A natural Effect of a natural Cause, III. 507, 510. Not inflicted as a Punishment, III. 508, 509. nor the Effect of Sin, merely as Sin, III. 508. nor from the Frequency of Sin, *Id. ibid.* How the Effect of the Fruit, III. 510. This agreeable to Scripture-History, III. 511. Why God did not prevent it, III. 512. The Notion of Providence and Government upon it, III. 512, 513.
- Nazarene*, (A) what, I. 139. The Messiah to be one, *Id. ib.*
- Nazarites*, what, and who were so, I. 140, 141. A Comparison between them and Jesus, *Id. ibid.*
- Necessity*, what, I. 283. Spinoza's, Hobbes's, &c. Arguments for the Necessity of all Things, refuted, II. 29, 246. is pernicious to Religion, II. 248.
- *Absolute*, I. 428, 429*. (This twofold — of Nature and of Acting, II. 248.) and
- *Hypothetical*, I. 428, 429*. See *Fatality*.
- and *Freedom*, not opposite with respect to God, I. 55.
- Neck* of Quadrupeds, different, II. 682. Answerable to the Length of their Legs, II. 682, 692. Strengthened by the White Leather, II. 682.
- Neighbour*, the Jewish Notion of him, I. 142. The Christian, I. 128, 475.
- Nerves*, their Use, II. 674. Use of the Fifth Pair, II. 675.
- Use of the Par vagum and Intercoastal Pair, II. 684, 685.
- Nest* (Hang-) II. 648.
- New America* } their State with respect to Religion, I. 10.
- Newfoundland* }
- Nititating Membrane*, II. 602, 681.
- Nidification*, II. 647.
- Nidiots*, II. 633.
- NOAH*, the Import of his Blessing of Shem, III. 525, 622.
- The Sin of Ham's discovering his Nakedness, III. 525.
- Nostrils*, II. 613. Their Laminæ, *Id. ibid.* Their Vibriffi, *Id. ibid.*
- Notions* (Common) what, I. 168. A Proof of Revelation, I. 168.
- Nutmegs*, II. 718.
- O.
- O**AK { Apples, } II. 708.
- { Galls, }
- Oath*, the Use of it, I. 10. Its Obligation, whence, III. 27.
- Necessary to the Support of Society, II. 439.
- Obedience*, perfect, originally requir'd, and why, II. 359.
- *sincere*, the Condition of our Salvation, III. 492.
- The Reasons and Grounds of our Obedience, I. 314.
- The Motives to it, II. 143. The Acceptableness of true Repentance, *Id. ibid.* Hopes of the divine Assistance, *Id. ibid.* A clear Discovery of future Rewards and Punishments, II. 144.
- Objects*, how painted on the Retina, II. 604.
- Oblations*, Jewish, all except the Eucharistical to cease, III. 751.
- Obligation*, its Nature and Ground, I. 305. The Right and Power of it different, I. 306. Our Obligation to be like God, III. 431. — to behave our selves suitable to our several Relations, III. 431.
- That there are Obligations founded in Nature, III. 441.
- Obligations*, Moral, whence, II. 214. Their Grounds eternal and necessary, II. 54. Mens natural Sense of eternal Moral Obligations, prov'd from the Judgment they pass upon the Actions of others, II. 86. An Objection to this, from the total Ignorance of some barbarous Nations, answer'd, II. 88. The principal Moral Obligations, II. 88. — Piety (or Those to God) II. 88, 539. — Righteousness, II. 89. — Sobriety, II. 93. Eternal Moral Obligations antecedent in some respect to the Will and Commandment of God himself, II. 96. They are, moreover, his express Will and Command, II. 106. prov'd from the Consideration — of the divine Attributes, II. 106. — of the Nature of God's Creation, II. 108. — and from the Tendency of the Practice of Morality to the Good and Happiness of the whole World, II. 109. They are necessarily attended with Rewards and Punishments, II. 110.
- Obliged*. Men may be obliged to act such a particular Way, I. 305, 309. — according to what their Reason approves or condemns, I. 312. — from the Frame and Disposition of their Minds, I. 313. — from the Constitution of human Society, I. 314.
- Olam*, *Le Olam*, and *Ad Olam*, the Meaning of those Words, III. 733.
- Omnipotence*, how known, I. 410.
- Omnipresence*, how known, I. 409. An Attribute of God, II. 222.

- II. 222. The Difficulty of conceiving it without Divisibility, no greater than that of conceiving a finite Spirit, II. 222.
- Omniscience*, how known, I. 411.
- Opinions*. Men not always safe in acting according to their Opinions, III. 286, 287. When they deserve Blame for them, III. 287, 291.
- Opium*, II. 720.
- Opussum* (the), II. 638, 639.
- Oracles* prove that a Revelation may be made, III. 101.
- Their Silence a Proof of Christianity, III. 486, 675.
- Oral Law*, what, I. 109.
- Orbis* (*Magnus*) its Circumference, II. 573.
- Ostrich*, II. 656, 694. Her Eggs, II. 695.
- Otter*, his Legs, II. 679.
- P.
- P**AGAN. See *Atonement, Deity, Idolatry, Theology*.
- *World*, its State when our Saviour appear'd, I. 446, 465. Its Ignorance of a Deity, and of the several Particulars of their Duty, *Id. ibid.*
- Pain*, what, I. 283. The Use of it, III. 298. Why Animals subject to it, III. 202.
- Paradise*, the Loss of it by Sin, II. 148. The Goodness of God in shutting our first Parents out of it, and incursing the Ground, III. 514.
- Pardon*, natural Light gives no Assurance of it, III. 602.
- A Matter of Favour, not due to Repentance but in Consequence of some Promise, III. 602. Sacrifice not sufficient for it by Natural Light, III. 603.
- Parents Duty* to their Children, II. 544.
- (*First*) their Original State, III. 253. Their Sin, III. 252. The Occasion of it, III. 254. [How drawn into the Commission of Sin, I. 447. How they could fall into Sin, hard to conceive, III. 501. Capable of Temptation to Sin but in one Instance, III. 502. Their Compliance with this out of a Principle of Duty, III. 502.] The Punishment threatned to the Transgression, III. 255. The natural Consequence of inflicting such Punishment, III. 256. The Account of it agreeable to the natural Notions we have of God, III. 256. An Objection to this from God's Precedence, answer'd, III. 258.
- Parrots*, II. 633. The Ethiopian Parrots Storge, II. 639.
- Partridges*, *Id. ibid.*
- Passions*, what, III. 419. Modifications of the Will, *Id. ib.*
- How they belong to the Divine Nature, *Id. ibid.* Reason of their different Names, *Id. ibid.* The Perfection of them in God, III. 420. Naturally good, I. 421. III. 237. See *Soul*.
- *Concupiscible* and *Iracible*, arose from Sin, III. 446.
- How to be regulated, *Id. ibid.*
- Patriarchs*, I. 432. God's Revelations of himself to Adam preserv'd by their Longevity, I. 166. — This a Reason of it, II. 172. God's Revelation to them, II. 149.
- PAUL**, St. his Art in accommodating his Discourse to his Audience, I. 12. His Character, I. 22, 239. as a Writer of his Epistles, I. 655. II. 749. The Reasons why we receive his Writings, I. 599.
- Peace*. The Necessity of Peace and Purity, II. 560.
- Pelican*, II. 656.
- Pendulum*, its Variation under the Line, II. 576.
- Pentateuch*, the Difference between the Samaritan and Jewish not material, II. 754.
- Perception*. Matter, Brain, Animal Spirits, no particular sort of Motion, or Action, or Passion of them, can produce Perception, I. 17, 18, 19. II. 238. (Not necessarily connected with Matter and Motion, I. 297, 300.) But it proceeds from some incorporeal Substance, I. 20. Not confin'd to Bodily Senses, II. 36.
- Perfection* of all Things, III. 423, 425.
- *absolute*, what, III. 407. prov'd to belong to the Self-existent Being, III. 408.
- *human*, in what it consists, I. 434, 443.
- Perfections of God*, neither distinct from the divine Essence, nor from one another, III. 409. Consider'd as a Substance, III. 413. — as a living Substance, *Id. ibid.* — as a Substance with Sense, III. 414. (The Perfection of God in this, called his *Happiness*, III. 414.) — as a Substance with Reason, III. 414. Rules to judge of his Works, III. 421.
- The Difficulty in conceiving some Perfections in God, no Reason for Disbelief, III. 293. Objections against his (Attributes and) Perfections, refuted, I. 405.
- Perfections* (*Moral*) essential to the divine Nature, III. 89.
- Are not of another Nature and Kind than those in Man, III. 233.
- Peripatetics*, their Principles, I. 12, 13.
- Persecution*, the Advantages of it to Christianity, I. 824.
- See *Christianity*.
- Perspiration*, Insensible, II. 643.
- PETER**, St. his Second Epistle Canonical, II. 753.
- Phænomena*, some of the principal ones in the World, I. 64, &c. 71.
- Phalænæ*, II. 645, 648. The Generation of some of them, II. 704. Their textrine Art, II. 707.
- PHARAOH**, his Impenitence consider'd, I. 268.
- Philosophers* always allow'd a Moral Difference in Things, III. 352. Their Method of teaching their Scholars, III. 373. Their Ignorance of the Cause and Cure of the Corruption of human Nature, III. 103. Unable to reform Mankind, III. 104. Their Ignorance in Matters of Religion, III. 107. See *Heathen*. They own'd their want of Revelation, III. 109.
- Philosophy*, Corpuscular, I. 32.
- PHINEAS**, the Priesthood to continue in his Family for ever, II. 326.
- Phthiriasis*, some Account of that Distemper, I. 40.
- Pia* (the), II. 639.
- Piety*, II. 88.
- Pimpernel*, II. 716.
- Plague*, its Cause, II. 566. III. 193. Prevented or cured by the Winds, II. 566.
- Plague-fore* discharg'd unusually, II. 673.
- Planets*, their Motion, I. 69, 71. (— round their Axis, II. 573. Their Motions accounted for, III. 175. Their Figure, II. 576.) The Effect of divine Power, I. 72. — of Wisdom and Goodness, I. 78. In circular Orbs most beneficial, I. 78. They could not attain their present circular Revolutions, either by Principle of Gravitation, or by Impulse of ambient Bodies, I. 74. They receive their Influence from the Sun, I. 77.
- *The Planetary System*, III. 174. The particular Law by which it is govern'd, III. 176. This Law might have been different from what it now is, III. 177. This Law the Effect of Choice, and not of Necessity or Chance, III. 178.
- Plant*, Sensitive, II. 716.
- Plants* produced from Seed, I. 41. Poisonous, their Use in Medicine, II. 583.
- PLATO**, the Design of his Writings, III. 43. His Observation, why Men are induc'd to be Atheists, I. 9. His Opinion, that the Soul is not derived from pre-existent Matter, III. 296.
- Platonists*, their Opinion of the Beginning of human Race, I. 13. Their Notion resembling that of the Trinity, whence, I. 468. — is a Confirmation of the Christian Doctrine, I. 468.
- Pleasure*, what, I. 283.
- Pleasures*, Religious, of the Soul, much preferable to sensual Gratifications, II. 453.
- Plexus cervicalis*, II. 684.
- Poets*, their Esteem among the common People, I. 13.
- Teach the separate Existence of human Souls, I. 13.
- Polygamy*, why it prevail'd, I. 478.
- Polytheism*, III. 467.
- Power*, Creative, the Atheists Objections against it, refuted, III. 296, 303, 304.
- Power*, Infinite, does not extend to working Contradictions, II. 33. nor to those Things which imply Natural or Moral Evil, II. 33. but to the creating Matter, II. 34. and immaterial cogitative Substances, II. 34. and communicating to a Creature — the Power of beginning Motion, II. 37. — and Freedom of Will, II. 38.
- Power of God*, what, III. 411. The Extent of it explain'd, III. 418. See *Contradictions*. — Prov'd, from the Creation and Preservation of the World, I. 63.
- Preachers*, the Necessity and Use of an Order of them, II. 124. The Necessity of a standing Ministry, III. 477. The Evidence of a divine Authority accompanying the first Preachers of the Gospel, III. 485. The Exemplariness of their Lives necessary for the Propagation of the Gospel, III. 489.
- Preaching*, the Excellency of the Christian, III. 375.
- Precepts*, the Christian not unreasonable, I. 799.
- Predictions*, a Proof of divine Mission, I. 94. Typical have the

- the same Authority with the Literal, III. 609.
 — of the *Messiah*, not at first so fully understood, III. 611. See *MESSIAH*.
 That of the *Seed of the Woman* to bruise the Serpent's Head, has a literal and mystical Meaning, III. 612. not useless, nor unintelligible, III. 617. How understood by the ancient Jews, III. 618. Explain'd by the Speeches of those of the first Ages, III. 618.
 — of *Joseph*, III. 102.
 — of *Christ*, I. 204, 592. concerning the Destruction — of the Jewish Temple, I. 97. — and of Jerusalem, I. 97. Those of Jesus a stronger Proof of his divine Mission, than those of Moses were of his, I. 95. Those of Moses and Jesus compar'd, I. 96.
 — of the *Apostles*, I. 95.
 Predictions are not the only Proofs of our Religion, III. 610.
Prejudice, III. 5, 470, 471. If any allowable, they ought to be on the side of Religion, III. 279. Their force, I. 439. How to be remedied, I. 77.
Prescience (see *Foreknowledge*) the Nature and Foundation of it, III. 259. Does not affect the Actions of Free Beings, *Id. ibid.* No just Reason for overruling their Faculties, III. 260.
Preservation. See *Sinners*.
Pride, its Seat, II. 675. The Vanity of it, I. 405. A Cause of Atheism, I. 361. The Root of Heresies and Infidelity, II. 256.
Priest, *High*, or *Chief*, what, I. 145.
Priesthood, Levitical, to be abolish'd, III. 748. The Appointment of the Aaronical, I. 779. Their Office, III. 780.
Principles. See *Independent*, *Religion* Christian. — Zoroaster's Notion of two contrary Principles, III. 310.
 — *Religious*, concern all Mankind to be satisfied about, III. 8. Sufficient Reason to believe them, III. 12. Unreasonable to persuade others against them, for one not convinc'd himself that they are false, III. 15. — (Few to be convinc'd, III. 15.)
 — in respect of God, III. 16. — and Man, III. 16.
 Unreasonable to make them the Subject of Ridicule, III. 17. Pleas for it answer'd, III. 18.
 — Nothing but a Belief of them, can carry a Man through the Miseries of Life, III. 279. This own'd by Epicurus, III. 280. — and by all other Atheists, in their Account of the first Introduction of Religion, III. 281. Necessary to the Peace of Societies, III. 281. Set the Mind easy from the Fears of a future State, III. 283.
Printing, its Invention, II. 663, 664.
Prodigality, a Law against it, III. 447.
Prodigies, a Proof of a God, II. 218. Natural Effects mistaken for them, III. 360.
Propagation of the Gospel, the surprizing Manner of it, III. 134. — an Argument of its Truth and Divinity, III. 139. An Objection to this from Mahometanism, answer'd, III. 139. The Agreement of the Apostles, a Cause of the wonderful Manner of it, III. 370. The Exemplariness of the Lives of the first Preachers necessary for it, III. 489.
Property, what, III. 450.
Prophecy (see *Miracles*) defin'd, I. 173, 650. — twofold, II. 218. The Opinion of Antiquity concerning it, III. 99. — a Proof of a God, II. 218. — of Revelation, I. 158, 173, 203. (Prophecies destroy not the Use of Reason, II. 860.)
 — *Prophetic Style* and Language, peculiar to itself, and enigmatical, II. 267. Whether capable of more Senses than one, I. 728. Single and determinate, II. 268. — 1st, Because a single and determinate Sense of every Prophecy, is the only natural and obvious one, II. 268. — 2dly, Because allowing them to have more than one Event in view, would render their Exposition precarious, II. 269. — 3dly, Because a double Intention in Prophecies, would destroy their Proof of Christianity, II. 269. — 4thly, Because a double Sense of ancient Prophecies, is not mention'd by the Apostles and Evangelists, II. 270. 5thly, — nor by the most ancient Fathers of the Church, II. 272. Style and Language, how to be understood, II. 287, 296. (In the Prophetic Language, the Preterperfect Tense is often us'd for the Future, II. 281.) — often suited to the Time of the Accomplishment, II. 282. — not always coherent, but sometimes abrupt, II. 283. Prophecies not understood sometimes by the Prophets themselves, II. 286.
 The Gradation of Prophecy before and after the Call of Abraham, III. 611.
Prophecies, Particular. The Prophecy — of the Messiah to be born of a Virgin, &c. *Gen.* iii. 14, 15. explain'd, II. 287. — of an universal Deluge, *Gen.* vi. 5, 6, 11, 12. II. 290. — that the World should no more be destroy'd, particularly by a Deluge, till the Consummation of all Things, *Gen.* viii. 21, 22. ix. 8, &c. II. 292. — concerning the Posterity of Japhet, &c. *Gen.* ix. 25, 26, 27. II. 293. — concerning the Multiplication of Abraham's Posterity, *Gen.* xii. 1, &c. II. 294. — that in Abraham's Seed all Nations should be blessed, *Gen.* xii. 3, &c. II. 295. — that the Posterity of Abraham should possess the Land of Canaan, *Gen.* xii. 7, &c. II. 297. — concerning the Birth of Isaac, *Gen.* xv. 1, &c. II. 298. — concerning the Children of Israel's Descent into Egypt, their Oppression there, and Return, *Gen.* xv. 12, — 16. II. 300. — concerning the Destruction of Sodom, &c. *Gen.* xviii. 17, 20, 21. II. 303. — that the Posterity of Jacob should be more powerful than that of Esau, &c. *Gen.* xxv. 22, 23, &c. II. 305. — concerning Joseph's Exaltation, &c. *Gen.* xxxvii. 5, — 11. II. 307. — concerning seven Years of Plenty, and seven Years of Famine, *Gen.* xli. II. 309. — concerning the Coming of Shiloh, *Gen.* xlix. 8, 9, 10. II. 310. — concerning the Happiness or Misery of the Jews, upon their Obedience, or Disobedience to the Law of Moses, *Exod.* xix. 1, &c. II. 316. — Balaam's, of a Star and Sceptre to arise out of the Posterity of Jacob, *Numb.* xxiv. 14, 17, — 24. II. 324. — that the High Priesthood was to continue in the Family of Phineas for ever, *Numb.* xxv. 11, 12, 13, &c. II. 326. — of a Prophet like unto Moses, *Deut.* xviii. 15, — 19. II. 327. — concerning the City of Jericho, *Josb.* vi. 26. II. 330. — concerning the Advent and Kingdom of the Messiah, 1 *Sam.* ii. 9, 10. II. 330. — of the Judgments against the House of Eli, 1 *Sam.* ii. 31, — 36. II. 331. — that the Messiah was to rise of the Seed of David, 2 *Sam.* vii. 12, &c. II. 333, 340.
 — *Prophecies*, the Necessity of them, III. 546. The Design of them, I. 716. The Messiah and his Kingdom the main Aim of most of the Prophecies, II. 273. General Rules for the Interpretation of them, II. 267, 315. The Christian Interpretation of them vindicated, I. 707. Jewish Objections against this, I. 709. Why they are obscure, I. 710. Why those concerning the Messiah should be obscure, I. 710. II. 280. — because deliver'd in Parables and Allegories, I. 711. — from the Nature of the Events, I. 712. — from his different Offices, I. 712. — from the promiscuous Mention of his first and second Coming, I. 714. (Some Prophecies concerning his first, and some his second Coming, II. 275.) Sufficient, notwithstanding this Obscurity, I. 716. Remarks upon the Grounds of the Christian Interpretation of them, I. 721. The Manner of this Interpretation justified, I. 728. Scripture Prophecies are rightly understood by us, III. 559. The Force of Arguments drawn from Prophecies, and of the Proof of the Christian Religion from thence, I. 731.
 — Prophecies of the Messiah understood in their natural Meaning, III. 560. Prophecies that went before concerning the Messiah, II. 167. Prophecy — of [the Gathering of the People] implies the Obedience of all Nations to the Messiah, III. 649. The Part of the Prophecy of Balaam, which concerns the Character of Christ, consider'd, III. 659. This Prophecy not fulfill'd in David, III. 660. Nathan's Prophecy, how applicable to Solomon, and how to Christ, III. 665. Daniel's Prophecy of the Seventy Weeks, III. 708. The Desolation here foretold, not to be understood of Antiochus, but of that of the Romans, III. 710. The Benefits here promis'd point out the Offices of the Messiah, III. 710. The Most Holy could not be the Jewish Sanctuary, III. 711. but Heaven, or the Church, or Christ himself, III. 711. The Weeks could not be Weeks of Days, but of Years, III. 711. These to be computed from the Royal Edict to rebuild Jerusalem, III. 712. The Doubts about the Method of computing them, do not affect the main Argument, III. 712. since every way they must conclude about the Time of Jesus, III. 712. The Expectation of the Jews at that time, and for some time after, III. 712.
 Prophe-

Prophecies not fulfill'd before Christ, III. 564. Those all'dg'd by the Evangelists, belong solely to the Messiah, II. 276.

Prophecies concerning our Saviour, I. 204. III. 557. Prophecies of the Time of our Saviour's Coming, Gen. xlix. 10. III. 552. — *Haggai*, ii. 7, 8, 9. III. 552. — *Mal.* iii. 1. III. 553. — *Dan.* ix. 24, — 27. III. 552. Prophecies, their Accomplishment an Evidence of our Saviour's divine Commission, II. 167. and a Proof of the Divinity of the Gospel, II. 517. Objections against Prophecies themselves, and the Application of them to Christ, answer'd, II. 168, 169. The Difficulty of understanding the Scripture-Prophecies, no Objection to Christianity, III. 497.

Prophecies of Christ, those which He deliver'd concerning Things that were to happen, II. 168. III. 140. The successive Accomplishment of those deliver'd by Christ and his Apostles, III. 140.

Prophecies of Moses and the Prophets, compar'd with those of Christ and his Apostles, I. 650. The Reason of the Cessation of Prophecy among the Jews, III. 558.

Prophecy, what meant by it in the New Testament, II. 731.

Prophet. The Promise of [a Prophet like unto Moses] consider'd, II. 173, 327. III. 653. — explain'd, III. 547. (The Wisdom of this Promise, III. 548. A Corollary from it, III. 549. Matter from hence for future Prophecies, III. 549.) To be understood, not of a Succession of Prophets, III. 653. for there was no such Succession, III. 654. (Their Office for public Benefit, III. 654.) — but of a *Prophet*, in the Singular, III. 655. One like unto Moses, III. 655. a Character peculiar to the greatest Prophet of all, III. 656. and commission'd to speak the Words of God, which answers to the Delivery of the Law by Moses, III. 656. The Commination against those who disobey this Prophet, how fulfill'd, III. 657. The Threatning against false Prophets, why added, III. 658. The Rule for trying them, II. 328. III. 658. Their Credentials, I. 225. The Age of several of the Prophets settled, III. 667.

Propaganda, I. 150.
Prosperity, its Abuse a Cause of Infidelity, II. 546.
PROTEUS, III. 302.

Providence (of God) I. 467. A View of Providence, III. 512, 513. — not impossible, II. 251. — not inconsistent with the Happiness of God, II. 252. Human Affairs not beneath its regard, II. 73, 251. Providence prov'd, III. 320. God's Existence a Proof of it, I. 2. A Providence a Proof of a God, II. 499. The different Manner of the Revelation of its Oeconomics, III. 609. — *Universal*, agreeable to the common Reason of Mankind, III. 23. Its continual Government, II. 148. — *Special*, II. 500. Over the Jews, peculiar, II. 317. Alter'd with their Constitution, II. 321. — Constant and occasional Interposition of God, or some Angel, prov'd, II. 163. Difficult to distinguish the Agents, II. 164. No History of Providence without an Account of many Prophecies and Revelations, III. 521. The promiscuous Dispensations of it accounted for, III. 268, 356. Various Dispensations of it owing to Sin, III. 500. — *Objections to it* — Unequal Distributions of it, no Argument against the Justice and Goodness of God, II. 51. Unequal Distributions of Rewards and Punishments, no Objection against Providence, II. 250.

Psammeticus. See *Speech*.

Pulices aquatici, II. 631. — *arborescentes*, II. 700.

Pumps, why Water riseth in them, II. 564.

Punishment (see *Rewards*) the Evil of it, III. 271. God not the Author of it, III. 271. Punishment of Sin the proper Vindication of God's Holiness, II. 360. — of Adam's Sin, instructive to all Mankind, II. 360. Punishment due to, and Misery to be expected from, all personal Iniquities, as well as from the Sin of Adam, II. 388. The Reason of it, I. 794. Punishment threatened to Sinners in the Gospel, III. 272. The Qualifications of vicarious Punishment, I. 794.

— *Future Punishments*, to whom frightful, II. 446.

The Duration of it, III. 273. Eternal Punishment of the Damned credible, II. 156. Everlasting Punishment of finite Sins, not inconsistent with the Goodness and Justice of God, III. 494.

Pupil of the Eye, II. 600.
Vol. III.

Purity, the Necessity of Peace and Purity, II. 560.
Purity of Heart, what, I. 436. A necessary Qualification for receiving Religion, I. 436. particularly the Christian, I. 437.

PYTHAGORAS, II. 661.

Q *Quadrupeds*, a Survey of them, II. 679. Their Cloathing, II. 644. Of their prone Posture, II. 679. First, The Parts ministering thereto, II. 679. The Legs and Feet different in different Creatures, II. 679. Secondly, Its Usefulness to gather Food, &c. II. 680. Parts differing from those in Man, as — the Head, II. 680. Necks, II. 682. — Stomachs, II. 682. — Hearts, II. 683. The Difference between Quadrupeds and Men in the nervous Kinds, II. 684.

Quails, II. 693.
Qualities, Sensible, not subsistent in the Bodies themselves, but Effects of our Sensation, I. 16.

R *RAIN*, how made, II. 568. Its Use, II. 568. Most about the *Æquinoxes*, II. 568. — Bloody and preternatural, II. 569, 652. — of different Places, II. 569, 591. — more in the Hills than Vales, II. 591.

Rainbow, a Token of God's Promise not to destroy the World again by a Deluge, II. 292. III. 524.

Rats, II. 638, 643.

Raven, II. 630, 638.

Reaction, III. 323.

Readings, Various, of the Gospels, III. 397. How they affect the Text of Scriptures, II. 764.

Reason, Natural. See *Light*, Natural. — what meant by it, III. 414. Wherein it consists, I. 411. Many Properties of it, III. 73. Its Powers, III. 242. Reason, and the several Powers of the Mind, above the Power of the most subtil Matter, II. 240.

The Rule of Reason, III. 441. When Reason is said to be *right*, III. 441. *True Reason*, what, III. 89. Reason must be in God in the most perfect manner, I. 411. The same in all Intelligent Beings, III. 89. Reason of Man related to something above him, III. 72. — The Use of Reason in Religion, III. 8. The Use of it enjoin'd in Scripture, II. 855. Reason to judge of Religion, II. 797, 858. — of Revelation, II. 799. — of Scripture, II. 802. Our Guide to God and Happiness, I. 312.

Objection against human Reason being corrupted, answer'd, II. 840. The Corruption of it can't be prov'd to be the Effect of Adam's Sin, II. 842. Objections out of Scripture against the Use of Reason in religious Matters, consider'd, II. 842, 850, 852. Scripture, Faith, Church, or the Spirit of God, do not supersede the Use of Reason, II. 859. nor Miracles, nor Prophecies, II. 860. What is meant by being *above* Reason, II. 860. Difference between Things above, and contrary to Reason, I. 750. Requiring our Assent to Things above Reason, does not take away the Use of it in religious Matters, I. 753. Two Cases wherein Reason must submit to Faith, II. 861.

Reason not sufficient to reform the Notions, III. 468. — or the Manners of the World, III. 473. Reason insufficient to insure any Man in religious Truths, III. 370. — Reason, *Human*, the Conceit of its Sufficiency a Cause of Infidelity, II. 545.

— *Reason, Eternal* (of Things) the Rule of God's Will, and of Mens Actions, II. 83. III. 247. prov'd from the original Nature of Things, II. 84. and the Sense that wicked Men have of such an Obligation, II. 84. — from the Judgment of Mens Consciences upon their own past Actions, II. 85. and upon the Actions of others, II. 86.

Reconciliation, less difficult of God to Man, than of Man to God, I. 461, 463. The Gospel Account of Man's Reconciliation most agreeable to the Attributes of God, II. 363. The Unreasonableness and Insufficiency of other Methods, II. 363.

Records. The Method of transmitting the Christian Records, affords us greater Assurance of their Purity, than those used for the Conveyance of the Jewish, I. 661.

Redeemer. The Necessity of a Redeemer, II. 362. A Redeemer promis'd, III. 516. Christ the Redeemer of all Men, II. 388.

- Redemption.* See *Reconciliation.* — The Redemption of human Nature consider'd, II. 392. The Nature of it, III. 516. wonderful, I. 451. The Wisdom of it, III. 516. The Wisdom of God in it, II. 353. Redemption supposes Misery to have been our Portion without it (prov'd from Scripture and Reason) II. 389. Which Misery must have been in a State of Death, II. 389. This Redemption explain'd to our first Parents, III. 517. Sacrifices appointed in Remembrance of it, III. 517. The great Necessity of Christ's Incarnation for that End, II. 393. Angels incapable of Redeeming us, II. 393. No other Man capable of Redeeming us, II. 399. Angels have no Share in our Redemption, II. 393. This Method of our Redemption, vindicates the Righteousness of God's punishing Adam's Sin by the Mortality of all Mankind, II. 394. By what Actions, &c. Jesus purchas'd it for us, II. 396. by an absolute Obedience to all God's Laws, II. 396. by his Death, II. 397. by his Victory over Death, II. 401. by his Relation to us as the Son of God, II. 402. by his Ascension into Heaven, II. 404.
- The Immortality of the Soul suppos'd in the Doctrine of Redemption, II. 391.
- Reformation.* The Necessity of a Revelation for the Reformation of Mens Notions, III. 469. and Manners, III. 473.
- Refractions,* their Use, II. 565, 667.
- Regeneration,* what, I. 219.
- REGIOMONTANUS, his wooden Eagle, and iron Fly, II. 664.
- Relation,* the Relations of Things consider'd, III. 425. Consequences from the Relation — of Means and Ends, III. 425. — of Causes and Effects, III. 426. — of Faculties and Objects, III. 432. This Relation to be observ'd, III. 432.
- Religion* in General, what meant by it, I. 282. III. 406. The Notion of true Religion, III. 542. as true as our Faculties, II. 501. The Certainty and Necessity of it, prov'd — from the Nature of Man, I. 283. — the Nature of God, I. 285. — the Relation between them, I. 285, 305. — from a Comparison of it with Irreligion, I. 320. [All Societies of Men have ever profess'd the Principles of Religion, III. 31. Universal Consent in the first Principles of Religion, did not arise from human Art, III. 40. The Suspicion to the contrary prov'd groundless from — History, III. 41. — Tradition, III. 42. and Reason, III. 47.] Objections against it answer'd, I. 333. Religion not a Political Contrivance, I. 335. The different Grounds of it and Irreligion, I. 336. How much Men ought to know of it, II. 852. Who qualified to receive it, I. 429, 434. The Qualifications requisite — 1st, A serious and compos'd Temper of Spirit, I. 435. — 2dly, A good degree of Humility, I. 436. — 3dly, Purity of Heart, I. 436. How Men must be qualified to judge of its Evidence, II. 194. Every one capable of judging of the Truth of it, II. 809. The Sense of it how to be supported, III. 599.
- Its *Advantages.* The immediate Connection between it and Happiness in this Life, I. 315. Religion and Virtue highly advantageous to the public Prosperity, II. 438. — necessary to the Support of Society, II. 439. and to the Regulation of Mens Conduct, II. 439. Religion lays no Restraint upon us but for our Advantage, III. 382. — No Matter of Shame, II. 433. Scoffing at it inexcusable, II. 5. and unjustifiable, II. 253.
- *Natural,* what, I. 435. II. 503. III. 441. Its Substance, III. 441. The Duties of it, how discover'd, II. 798. The Particulars of it, III. 441. How far discoverable by Reason, III. 442. Natural Obligations to believe the Principles of Natural and Reveal'd Religion, III. 3. How corrupted after the Flood, I. 161. The Defect of a regular Practice of Religion, and the Consequences of it, lead us to acknowledge a Future State, I. 317. — Particular, consider'd in a single Capacity, I. 7. and in Society, I. 10.
- of the Stoics, III. 107.
- of the Academics, III. 108.
- of the Magistrate, } consider'd, II. 438.
- of the People, }
- *Revealed* — The Reasonableness of receiving the Scripture System of it, III. 606. The more it is examin'd, the more it will gain Belief, II. 824.
- *Jewish,* I. 466. II. 139. A Sum of it, III. 557.
- *Christian* (see *Christ's Doctrine, Revelation*) what, I. 435. A Scheme of its Principles, I. 4. 467. III. 609. Its Delights and Advantages even in this Life, I. 6, &c. Its Credibility, I. 429, &c. What Evidence the Jews requir'd of it, I. 633. and what the Gentiles, I. 633. The Objections of the Jews against it, consider'd, I. 635. The Evidences of it, I. 133. Its Evidence abundantly sufficient, II. 192. The want of better Evidence not the Cause of Mens Unbelief, II. 193. The Proofs and Evidence already given of it, not to be excepted against, I. 615. Every one capable of judging of Christianity, that it is the true Religion, II. 809.
- Its *Wisdom,* I. 812. More for the Glory of God, and the Good of Mankind, than the Schemes of its Adversaries can be, I. 812. This appears — in the Abrogation of the Levitical Law, I. 814. — in the Meanness of the Figure the Messiah made on Earth, I. 815. — in the Articles of Faith, which surpass our Comprehension, I. 819. — in its Moral Duties, I. 821. Its Excellency, II. 505. Its Divinity, III. 580.
- A *Divine Revelation,* II. 139. See *Revelation.* — The Christian Religion has all the Marks of a divine Revelation, II. 140. III. 481. How proved a divine Revelation, II. 742. worthy of God, III. 123.
- Its *Doctrine* (and Practice) agreeable to Reason, II. 146. — 158. The Tendency of all these to reform Mens Manners, II. 158. All of them the most rational Scheme of Belief, II. 159. Requires nothing to be believed repugnant to right Reason, I. 737.
- The Perfection of it in Points of Practice, I. 799. 1st, In regard to our Neighbour, in forgiving and loving even our Enemies, I. 800. 2dly, In regard to Our selves, in Self-denial, and abstaining from all Appearance of Evil, III. 805. 3dly, In regard to God, in taking up our Cross, &c. I. 808.
- Practical Duties* of it agreeable to our natural Notions of God, and perfective of the Nature and Happiness of Men, II. 140. This is a great Evidence of its coming from God, II. 142. The Motives of it are most suitable to the Wisdom of God, and answerable to the natural Expectations of Men, II. 143. The Manner of enjoining these Duties, and urging these Motives, agreeable to Reason, II. 145. An Objection drawn from the Divisions among Christians, answer'd, II. 146. Nothing shameful in the Matter of Faith, II. 434. nor in the Practice of it, II. 435. either upon the public Account, II. 437. or particular present Good, II. 441. (Its Practice why most highly Honourable, &c. II. 436.) — nor upon account of such Credulity of the religious Man, as the Atheists are wont to reproach him for, II. 455. no such Matter of Reproach prov'd from their Principles, II. 456. or if there was, need he be ashamed of his Credulity, II. 457. It conduceth — to the Welfare of the Body, II. 441. — to the outward State, II. 442. — and to the Peace of the Mind, II. 443. As it arms against all disturbing tormenting Fears, II. 443. — of the Calamities of this Life, II. 443. — of Death, II. 444. — of future Punishment, II. 445. and against the Disturbances which Anger, &c. are wont to give it, II. 447. — to its Delight and Pleasure, II. 450. Its divine Light, Succour, and Comfort, II. 503. Discovers many Truths necessary to our Pardon and Peace, &c. II. 505. Discovers the Nature and Attributes of God, II. 505. Communicates supernatural Aids, II. 510. Lays a Foundation of Comfort in all Conditions, II. 510. A reasonable Service, I. 8. Recommended to the Consideration of the Deist, III. 381.
- *Promulgation* — The wonderful Manner of it, III. 134. Freed from Suspicion of Imposture, *Id. ibid.* The marvellous Effects of it in the Lives of those that attended to it, III. 136. The Methods of Heathen Philosophers to oppose it, III. 138.
- *Mahometan,* II. 139. Some Account of it, I. 466.
- Religious Truths,* the Causes that hinder Men from discovering and understanding them, II. 120. Carelessness and want of Attention, II. 120. Prejudices and false Notions, II. 121. Sensual Appetites, Passions, and worldly Business, II. 121. Vicious Habits and Practices, II. 122. — Hence the Necessity of Instruction in religious Truths, II. 122.
- Remission of Sin.* See *Sin.*
- Repentance,* what meant by it, I. 456. Not known to the Heathens, III. 479. Not full Satisfaction to God for the

the Sins of Man, I. 199, 454. II. 371, 380. Insufficient for the Pardon of Sin, III. 479. See *Pardon*. Alone no sufficient Expiation, II. 380. This Principle disallow'd by our Adversaries on other Occasions, II. 381. Not allow'd in Offences against human Laws, II. 382. God has declar'd his Sentiments against it, II. 383. Repentance is not sufficient to satisfy God's Justice, otherwise it would destroy the Necessity of Punishment, upon which all Atonement is founded, II. 385. Nor does it restore us to the Perfection of our original Righteousness, because Penitents are in a State of Sin, however zealous and contrite they may be, II. 386. How it comes to be admitted, II. 408. Repentance accepted by means of Christ's Expiation, I. 521. The Acceptableness of Repentance a Motive to Obedience, II. 143. Repentance is all that is possible, II. 409. — is all that can be expected from the Sinner, I. 454. An indispensable Condition of the New Covenant, II. 408.

Reptiles, their Cloathing, II. 644. Their Motion — slow, II. 622. — vermicular, &c. II. 710. Their Poison useful — to others, II. 711. and to themselves, II. 712.

Respiration, II. 616. — in compressed Air, II. 562. — in rarified Air, II. 563. — of watry Animals, *Id. ibid.*

The Uses of Respiration, II. 616. III. 190. The Parts concerned in it, II. 617. Its Defect in the Fœtus in the Womb, II. 619.

Respiration — in amphibious Creatures, II. 620. — in some Animals in the Winter, II. 620. — in Fish, II. 713. — in Vegetables, II. 714.

Resurrection, how understood at first, I. 14. — of dead Bodies very rare, and not a natural Effect, III. 360. nor to be done by any Agent inferior to God, II. 402. III. 361. No Proof that Apollonius rais'd a dead Person to Life, III. 362. Consider'd under any human Explication, not a fundamental Doctrine, II. 775. The Necessity of a Resurrection, III. 463. Resurrection of the Body credible, II. 155. — of the same Body credible, II. 155.

— *Christ's* (see *Apostle*) an historical Account of it, I. 122. III. 363. Its Certainty, I. 564, 568. The decisive Miracle, II. 518. The Manner of the Apostles reasoning for it, out of the Old Testament, III. 663.

— Mr. Emms's, II. 518.

Rete mirabile, II. 681.

Revelation (see *Gospel*, *Miracle*, *Notions common*, *Religion Christian*) what, I. 157. — Natural, what, III. 441. — Supernatural, whether any thing requir'd in one, III. 441.

— *Divine*, the Marks of it, II. 140. What are the Characters of it, I. 176, 198. Must be prov'd by extraneous Principles, I. 176. Must be worthy of God, I. 177. II. 355. (Must have certain Marks of Truth, *Id. ibid.*) Not contradictory to Moral Good and Evil, I. 177. Something farther requisite to the Proof of it, I. 178. (See *Inspiration*.)

The several Characters of it, III. 473, 478, 480, 481. 1st, That it deliver a perfect Rule of Life, &c. III. 475. 2dly, That it give a full Assurance — of Pardon of Sin, III. 478. — of Assistance and Acceptance, III. 479. and of a Future State, III. 480. 3dly, This to be confirm'd by the Power of Miracles, III. 471, 481. 4thly, That the first Preachers of it be endued with proper Zeal, III. 476. and the Gift of Languages, III. 477. Such a Revelation may be expected from God, considering the general State of Mankind, III. 97. Agreeable to Reason to expect one, II. 134. The Unreasonableness of denying the Want and Use of it, II. 136. A Revelation from God to Mankind not unreasonable, II. 151. — not unworthy of God to offer it as a Test, I. 438.

I. Its Possibility, I. 158. II. 488, 741, 775. (Not impossible to God, III. 98.) Prov'd from daily Experience — from the certain Evidence of a divine Revelation — and from God's being able to make it, and Man's being capable to receive it, I. 158. Every religious Man is to inquire, whether God has made a Revelation of his Will, III. 88.

II. Its Probability, II. 488. A Revelation not incredible, III. 99.

III. Its Expediency, I. 158. Its Usefulness, I. 162. Revelation the best way of teaching the World, III. 369. See *Teaching*.

IV. Its Necessity and Use, II. 137. III. 103, 604. (God

not oblig'd to make any Revelation, II. 138. III. 378.) In a State of Purity, a Revelation necessary concerning — Food, III. 454. — Marriage, III. 456. — Language, III. 449. Prov'd — from the Deficiency of Morality, III. 245. — absolutely necessary for the Recovery of Mankind, II. 133. — for the Reformation of the Manners of the World, III. 473. and Mens Notions, III. 469. A Revelation necessary relating to the Preservation of Mankind from Death, III. 513. Another of the Certainty of their Death, III. 514. Another of their Resurrection, *Id. ibid.* The Fallacy of those who think Revelation unnecessary, III. 111. The Necessity of various Revelations, III. 464, 520. — after Moses's Time, III. 551. — before the Coming of Christ, III. 467. and at the Time of our Saviour's Coming, both for Jews and Gentiles, III. 577.

V. Its Truth and Certainty. Every Man's Duty to endeavour to distinguish true Revelation from pretended, III. 113. There is a true Revelation, III. 114. An Objection concerning the Difficulty of distinguishing between true and pretended Revelation, clear'd, III. 126. How to judge of the Truth of it, I. 180. How After-Ages may judge of the Truth of it, I. 184. Must be judg'd of by Reason, II. 799. Reason must submit to divine Revelation, II. 355. The Certainty of it, I. 164. Its Moral Evidence, I. 165. Natural Proof of it — from Speech, I. 167. and from common Notions, I. 168. [Men generally perswaded of some Revelation, III. 99.] Traditionary Proof of it, I. 169. — from the Sabbath, I. 170. and from Sacrifices, I. 171. Supernatural Proof of it, I. 173. *viz.* Prophecy, I. 173, 203. and Miracles, I. 205. and Success, *Id. ibid.*

— Its Manner. The several Ways of Revelation, I. 218. — by Inspiration, I. 219. — by Vision, I. 220. — by Dreams, I. 222. (The Difference between the two latter, *Id. ibid.*) — by Voice, I. 223. Its Progress gradual, I. 228, 718. In the Patriarchal State, (Antediluvian and Postdiluvian) I. 229. In the Mosiacal, I. 230. [God's Revelation to the Patriarchs and the Jews, II. 149.] In the Evangelical, I. 231. Why God did not communicate his whole Will at first, I. 231. Why in these last Days, I. 232.

— Its Matter. Subject-Matter of it, what, I. 182. The Matter of it contain'd in the Old and New Testament, I. 186. Revelation teaches Men their Duty farther than the Light of Nature, III. 262.

Revelation, Personal, liable to Imposture, I. 244. Dangerous in its Consequences, I. 246.

Revelation, Christian. Partial Revelation does not affect its Divinity, III. 378. — to be universal, III. 379. — Its Excellency — as it removes the guilty Fears of Sinners, and their Ignorance of God, I. 460. As it teacheth us to know our selves, and our Duty, I. 470. As it proposeth to us — a perfect Example, I. 481. — and Assistance, and compleat Salvation to Sinners, I. 504. Sufficient to perswade Men to Repentance, I. 539. The Sufficiency of a standing Revelation, I. 531. The Perfection of the Gospel Revelation, I. 234. — it is the Best, II. 488. Proofs that it is Divine, II. 489. Its Agreement with the Characters of a divine Revelation, III. 481, 488. Better attested than the Jewish, I. 637. because the Miracles and Prophecies of Jesus and his Apostles, exceed those of Moses and the Prophets, I. 638. The Truth of it prov'd — from the Life and Character of our Saviour, II. 160. — from his Miracles, II. 161. — from the exact Completion of the Prophecies concerning Christ, II. 167.

— *Objections*, those of the Infidels against Revelation, III. 357. That there can be no rational Proof of it, *Id. ibid.* refuted, III. 359. Another Objection consider'd, III. 367. Why not universal, III. 377. The want of Universality no Objection against the Truth of a Revelation, II. 138, 153. Why not preach'd to every Nation, I. 519. III. 379. Why not in America and China, III. 380. Another Objection consider'd, III. 383. Its Doctrines above our Comprehension, no Objection to it, II. 488.

No Reason to desire new Revelations, I. 603. A new Proof needless, I. 603. — inconsistent with the Excellency of Faith, I. 605. — destructive of our Freedom of Choice, I. 605. The Inconvenience and Absurdities of granting a new Proof, I. 609. Our Interest to be convinc'd

- vinc'd by that already offer'd, I. 610. New Revelations would be unsuccessful, I. 613. No other Revelation to be expected, I. 239.
- Revelation* (the Book of) its Authority, II. 750, 753.
- Rewards and Punishments* (see *Providence*) necessary to maintain the Practice of Virtue, II. 96. (see *Virtue*.) Their Influence, II. 562. The Belief of them a necessary Foundation of Religion, III. 21. The Heathen had no Certainty of those of a Future State, II. 510. (see *Heathen*.) Their Eternity, II. 559.
- RHADAMANTHUS*, III. 101.
- Ribs*, II. 618.
- Ridicule*, consider'd as the Test of serious Things, II. 433. This applied to the Christian Religion, *Id. ibid.* Pleas for it answer'd, III. 18.
- Right*, what, III. 450, 452. The Absurdities of Mr. Hobbes's Original of it, II. 100.
- Righteousness*, II. 89.
- Rites*, Heathen, how to be accounted for, III. 770.
- Rivers*, their Origin, II. 590. Long Tract of some, II. 581. Changing the Hair, II. 645.
- Rook*, II. 691.
- Roots*, bulbous, II. 716.
- Rumination*, II. 636, 682.
- S.
- S***abbath*, when and why instituted, I. 170. III. 544. The most ancient Appointment, II. 725. Its Observance necessary, II. 544, 561. The Profanation of it Death among the Jews, II. 728. The Design and Business of this Day, II. 756.
- A Proof of Revelation, I. 170.
- Sacrifices*, (see *Pardon*) the ancient Philosophers and Christian Opinion of them, I. 13, 462, 464. Not invented by Men, I. 171, 676. 1st, Their Origin of divine Institution, I. 462. III. 624. The several Reasons of their Institution, I. 173, 678. II. 376. III. 517. *viz.* To give a Sense of Death, III. 518. — In Remembrance of a Deliverance from it, *Id. ibid.* — and as a Seal of a Covenant, *Id. ibid.* Their Nature and Use, I. 777. III. 624. — *Legal* — Their spiritual Meaning, III. 740. Not express'd in the original Covenant with the Jews, III. 741. To be abolish'd, III. 750. Of different Kinds, III. 775. Had different Views, tho' all had something Expiatory, III. 775. Had no real but *symbolical* Efficacy, III. 776. *Typical* of that of Christ, I. 788. III. 776.
- *Expiatory*, a Proof of Revelation, I. 171, 172.
- *Human*, III. 479. The Reason of them, III. 491.
- Sacrifice of Christ* (see *Satisfaction*) a perfect Satisfaction for the Sins of Men, I. 780. — made on the Cross, I. 783. — of the Son of God, expedient to reconcile the Justice and Mercy of God, upon Man's first Transgression, II. 534.
- Sacraments*, Christian, Two — the Effects of them, I. 677.
- Sadduces*, their Difference with the Jews, I. 250.
- Sagacity* of Animals — about Food, II. 637. — in Hunting, *Id. ibid.* — of some, greater than that of Man, II. 651. — in choosing the fittest Places for their Eggs and Young, II. 653. and the fittest Times for their Generation, II. 654. and in Feeding their Young, II. 656.
- Salamander*, II. 651.
- Salvation*, the Method of it surprizing, I. 441. By Jesus, I. 451, 468. The Credibility and Worthiness of it, I. 440. The most agreeable to the divine Nature, I. 444. What kind of Salvation He proposeth to Sinners, I. 449. Worthy of God — and such as ought to be received, I. 450.
- A Matter of pure Revelation, I. 468. The Gospel Account of it, II. 392. Is by the Covenant of Grace conditional, II. 405. Sincere Obedience the Condition of it, III. 492. The ordinary Means of Salvation sufficient for it, I. 268. God does nothing arbitrarily in it, II. 416.
- Samaritans*, their Controversies with the Pharisees, I. 250.
- Sanctification*, how advanced, II. 536.
- Satisfaction*, (see *Atonement*, *Mediator*, *Repentance*) what to be made to God by Christ, I. 454. Fully declared and made in the New Testament, I. 457, 464. Those who deny this not Christians, I. 458.
- I. The Doctrine of the Satisfaction of Christ, plainly deliver'd in the New Testament, I. 776. *viz.* (1.) That Christ died for the Sins of Mankind, I. 777. — (2.) His Death a Sacrifice for Sin, *Id. ibid.* — (3.) That this Sacrifice was a sufficient Satisfaction for the Sins of Men, I. 780. — (4.) That this Satisfaction was made upon the
- Cross, I. 783.
- II. This Doctrine not disagreeable to the Revelations of the Old Testament, I. 788.
- III. Not repugnant to Reason, I. 790.
- Objections against this Doctrine refuted, I. 792.
- Saturn*, how Animals can live there, explained, I. 79.
- Save*. Who the Persons are whom Jesus came to save, I. 441. — Consider'd, first, as Men, I. 441. — secondly, as Sinners, I. 444.
- Saviour*. Why the Promise of a Saviour was so darkly express'd, III. 520. because — 1st, Universally known in Moses's Time, *Id. ibid.* — 2dly, A general Hint sufficient for this Purpose, *Id. ibid.* Several Methods necessary to preserve the Memory of it, *Id. ibid.* Some Informations of the Time of his Coming, III. 521. The Necessity of the Prediction of the Time, III. 551. See *Prophecies*. Some Means necessary for the Proof that He was to be the Seed of the Woman, III. 521. A Repetition and Confirmation of this Promise necessary, *Id. ibid.* for the Preservation of the Faith in the promised Saviour, III. 525. The Means made use of for the Preservation of this Faith, III. 546, 547. The Characters by which he should be known, III. 551, 553. — That He was to be a *Prophet* like unto Moses, III. 554. See *Prophet*. — That He was to be a *King*, III. 555. See *MESSIAH*. — That He was to be a *Priest*, III. 556. The Benefit of all these Offices, III. 556. The Efficacy of his Undertaking, how extensive, I. 520.
- The Promise of a Saviour to be frequently repeated, III. 551. Many Things darkly hinted necessarily to be afterwards explained, *Id. ibid.*
- The Notion of a Saviour universally known, III. 568.
- The World universally prepar'd for his Coming, *Id. ibid.*
- This the proper Time for his Coming, III. 569. The Saviour promised is come, III. 570. — This shewn by the Expiration of the Prophecies, *Id. ibid.* and by many Pretenders setting up, *Id. ibid.*
- Jesus the promised Saviour, III. 570. The Prophecies compared with Him, III. 570. His Agreement with the first Promise shewn, *viz.* [that He should bruise the Serpent's Head] *Id. ibid.* — with the second Promise, *viz.* [that all Nations should be blessed in Him] *Id. ib.* — with the third, [that He is a Prophet like unto Moses] III. 572. — with the fourth, [that He should be a King like David] III. 574. — with the fifth, [that He is a Priest] III. 575.
- The Predictions of the Time of his Coming fulfill'd, III. 576.
- Our Saviour (and Messiah) a Teacher sent from God — proved, I. 588. 1st, From the Credibility of his Testimony of himself, I. 589. 2dly, From the Confirmation given unto it by God himself, III. 591. By the Testimony of the ancient Prophets, *Id. ibid.* — of John the Baptist, *Id. ibid.* By a Voice from Heaven, I. 592. By enduing Him with the Gift of Prophecy, I. 592. By the Power of working Miracles, I. 594. By raising Him from the Dead, I. 596. and by the Witness of the Holy Ghost, I. 597.
- Sceptic*, an Admonition to him, III. 326.
- School Terms*, their Vanity, II. 19.
- Scolopendra*, II. 711.
- Scripture*, how said to be fulfilled, I. 151.
- Scriptures*, III. 230. A Character of them, I. 162, 195.
- I. The Matter — prov'd true, I. 187. (1.) By its Credibility, I. 189. (2.) By its Self-agreement, I. 191. — (Errata, or Various Readings, do not affect the Original, I. 192. — nor Inconsistencies, which do not affect the main Body of the History, I. 193.) (3.) By its Agreement with other Authors, I. 193. (4.) By its being preferable to other Authors, I. 194.
- II. *Authority* — what meant by it, II. 744. Proved to be Divine, I. 196. II. 744. — (1.) From their Matter, I. 197. II. 745. being of divine Inspiration, *Id. ibid.* — Their Claims to this — 1st, As they come only from God, I. 198. being not of human, nor diabolical Invention, II. 746. 2dly, As they are worthy of God, I. 200. II. 746. 3dly, As they have a divine and supernatural Evidence, I. 203. (2.) From the Books themselves being of equal Authority, II. 748.
- The Truth of the Scriptures, II. 512.
- The Word of God, II. 514, 552.
- III. *Books*, (see *Book*, *Testament*) the Authority of them, II. 191.

- II. 191. Of divine Inspiration, I. 208. See *Inspiration*.
 Proved, (1.) from the Testimony of inspir'd Persons, I. 210. (2.) From their being written by inspir'd Persons, I. 211. (3.) From their being worthy of such Authors as were inspir'd, I. 213.
 — Those now receiv'd prov'd to be the same that were wrote by Persons inspir'd, I. 216. Not corrupted by the Jews or Heretics, *Id. ibid.* — or the Orthodox, II. 762. The present genuine, II. 758.
 IV. The *Writers* of three sorts, I. 207. Their Qualifications, I. 188. II. 749. (1.) They wanted no Knowledge, II. 749. — (2.) nor Veracity, II. 750.
 V. *Style and Perspicuity* (see *Gospel*.) Scripture Difficulties, I. 258. (See *Trinity*.) — how to be solved, I. 261. A Key to understand several Passages, III. 562, 579. The Use of Figures and Metaphors, III. 229. Scripture alludes to particular Rites and Customs, III. 230. The Misinterpretations of Scripture, *Id. ibid.* The Weakness of Misapplications of it, III. 231. An Instance of Bayle's Method of quoting it, III. 233.
 — The Plainness and Perspicuity of Scripture, II. 768. Variety of Interpretations no Objection against this, II. 769. — nor so many religious Controversies, II. 773. More plain than other Writings, II. 769. Clear in necessary Points, II. 770. Why difficult, II. 772. Easier to be understood than the Fathers, II. 833. Better now understood by us than by them, II. 835.
 VI. *Design, Motives, &c.* The Design of Scripture, III. 400. The Weakness of the Arguments pretended to be drawn from it, against the System of the Moral World, III. 226. A Miscellaneous Book, III. 227. The general Design of it, to recommend Morality, *Id. ibid.*
Motives — the strongest possible, I. 505, 614. God supposed in it to be the Governour of the World, II. 228. An History of Providence, III. 499. Many Truths revealed in Scripture, of great Importance to our Happiness, II. 503. The only Rule of Faith, I. 247. Every thing necessary to Salvation contained in it, II. 514. Proves an Eternal Life, II. 551.
 VII. *Sufficiency* of its Matter as to its Directions, I. 540. — as to its Motives, I. 544. — as to the Proof of it, I. 551. With regard to the Authors thereof, I. 551. — as to the Matters of Fact related by them, I. 562. and as to the divine Authority of all its Doctrines, I. 588.
 VIII. *Readers* — Who best qualified to read the Scriptures, II. 771. All Persons to have recourse to them in Matters of Controversy, I. 250. Directions how to search them, I. 252. — with Diligence, *Id. ibid.* — Sincerity and Impartiality, *Id. ibid.* To whom difficult, II. 772. Rules for Interpretation of them, I. 260. II. 737. See *Interpretation*.
Sea, the Reason of its Saltness, III. 186. Its Water, how far carried, II. 652.
Sea-Calf, II. 620, 683.
Sea-Pye, II. 633.
Secretion, Animal, II. 672.
Self-Denial, the Reasonableness and Necessity of it, I. 806. — from the Nature of Vice in general, I. 806. and the present Constitution of Mankind, I. 807. and from a future Judgment, *Id. ibid.*
Self-Existence. See *Existence*.
Self-Murder. See *Murder*.
Self-Preservation, worldly Advantages not inconsistent with it, I. 808.
 — of Animals, II. 650. See *Immortality*.
Sensation. See *Perception*.
Sense, what meant by it, III. 414.
 — The *Five Senses*, II. 594. Their Situation, II. 671. Why no more than Five, I. 24. Those most fit and suitable to our Condition, I. 25. The only Carriers of Intelligence concerning external Existences, III. 295.
Separate Person, what, I. 140.
Serpent. The Transaction of the Serpent, III. 255. The Temptation explain'd, III. 503. Who meant by the Serpent, *Id. ibid.* The Curse of it explain'd, III. 515.
Sex. Difference of Sex a Token of divine Wisdom, I. 50.
Shark, II. 582, 651.
Shechinah, II. 524. what, I. 222.
Shells, II. 650. In Rocks, &c. a Proof of an universal Deluge, I. 41.
Shiloh, (see *Prophecy*) what meant by it, II. 313. One of the Names of the *Messiah*, III. 646. To come before the Government departed from the Tribe of *Judah*, II. 310.
Sight, its Accuracy in some, II. 596, 638. The great Uses of it, II. 603. Acuted by Disease, II. 674.
Sin, — First, Its Origin, III. 500. Not of God, I. 266. The Time when it began known by its Effects, III. 500. That it arose from our first Parents before they had Children, III. 252, 500. Proceeds from the Abuse of Liberty, III. 249. This confirmed by Scripture, III. 250. — *Original Sin* (see *Human Nature*) owing to a Mistake in something commanded or forbidden by Revelation, III. 501. The Cause of that Mistake, *Id. ibid.* The Motive to it, III. 502. The Sin of our first Parents, *Id. ibid.*
 — Secondly, Its *Nature*, I. 444. — detestable, *Id. ibid.* and I. 454. Sin and Happiness incompatible, II. 361, 363. — Thirdly, *Effects* and Consequences, III. 268, 507. The true Cause of Man's Mortality, II. 538. Always productive of Misery, II. 362, 418. Without Sin — nor Death, nor Misery, nor Future State, III. 436. Its miserable Consequences, (1.) to any single Sinner — from its natural State, I. 445. (2.) To Mankind in general, shown from the History of Moses and St. Paul, I. 446.
 — Fourthly, Its *Infection* — by the Example, Authority, or Persuasion of others, III. 260. — of Temptation to Sin, III. 266. The moral Impossibility of preventing Sin, III. 268.
 — Fifthly, *Forgiveness* — What necessary upon the first Sin, III. 436. The Methods of Providence necessary in the Case, III. 507, 521. — in respect of the Devil, III. 514.
Arbitrary Remission of Sin unworthy of God, II. 364. Inconsistent with the Obligation of his first Law, *Id. ibid.* — with the Necessity of a future Judgment, II. 365. — with the Necessity of Holiness in Man, *Id. ibid.* — with the Essential Holiness of God, II. 366. and makes the Damnation of Sinners rather Arbitrary than Righteous, II. 367. This (Arbitrary Remission) founded on a false Notion of God's Justice, II. 368. The Use of this Doctrine, II. 370.
 — *Pardon* of Sin unknown to Reason, II. 509. III. 478. Repentance insufficient for this, III. 479. Socinian Motive of it, II. 509.
Singularity, an Affectation of it one Motive to Infidelity, III. 6, 288.
Sinners, who, 441. The first naturally liable to Destruction, III. 436. Capable of Preservation, *Id. ibid.* — The necessary Means of it, III. 437. The Persons — whom Jesus came to save, I. 441. Fit Objects of the divine Compassion, I. 441, &c. What renders their Case compassionate, I. 447. Their guilty Fears removed by the Gospel, I. 462. Have no Reason to expect any thing more to be done for them, III. 274.
Skeletons of Sexes different, II. 621.
Skin, II. 672.
Sky, why azure, II. 565.
Sleep procured, II. 583. Prejudicial after Sun-rising, II. 578.
Smelling, its Instrument, II. 613. Its Use, *Id. ibid.* Sagacity of Creatures in Smelling, II. 637, 638.
Snails, II. 710, 712. Their Eyes, II. 597.
Snakes, their sinuous Motions, II. 710.
 — *Rattle*, II. 582, 710. Its Vertebrae, II. 711.
Snipes, II. 633.
Snow, its Use, II. 569.
Sobriety, II. 93.
Sodom. See *ABRAHAM*, *Prophecy*.
Solidity inseparable from Matter, I. 297. — essential to it, III. 317.
 SOLOMON, his Wisdom the Gift of God, II. 661. Abus'd by the Freethinkers, II. 787. A Type of Christ, III. 664.
 SON OF GOD — His only Begotten, II. 146. Of God's sending Him into the World for the Redemption of Mankind, II. 150.
Sovereignty, what, III. 418. No Attribute of God, *Id. ib.*
Soul of Man, II. 658.
 — I. Its *Origin* and *Nature*. — Created out of Nothing, I. 61. Not from preexistent Matter, III. 296. Not a Modification of the divine Substance, III. 304. — nor a Part of the divine Being, as Pythagoras thought, III. 307. The Chinese Opinion of it, III. 305. Dicaearchus's Notion of it, III. 340. The Atheists Notion, II. 549, 554.
 Its various Genii, II. 659. Not the same in different Individuals, III. 325.
 — II. Its *Operations*, I. 442. Not a mere *rasa Tabula*, II. 203.
 (10 A)

- II. 203. Its inventive Power, II. 659. Its Powers and Faculties, III. 236. Dispositions, III. 237. Its Liberty of choosing consider'd, I. 443. Its Passions abstractedly consider'd — not Evil, III. 237. The Abuse of these the Origin of all Evil, III. 238.
- III. Its Excellence and Perfection, I. 442. The Contrivance of God, II. 662. Its Faculties prove a God, II. 501.
- IV. Its Immateriality — Its separate Existence, I. 13. Not Self-Existent, III. 411. An immaterial Substance, I. 15. II. 35. The Difficulty of conceiving how Matter works upon it, no Objection against its Immateriality, III. 338. A Fallacy of Hobbes concerning its being Matter, II. 42. Its Materiality and Mortality supposed — not destructive of Religion and a future State, I. 332.
- V. Its Immortality — The true Notion of its Eternity, I. 58. The natural Proofs we have of its Immortality, II. 116. Immortal, because accountable, II. 243. Cicero's Defence of it, II. 785. Known to the Jews, II. 787. Not an Invention of the Egyptians, III. 35. Believed by others besides the Vulgar, III. 36. — by the oldest Philosophers, III. 37. The Credibility of its Immortality of great use to the wiser Heathens, II. 118.
- Its Transmigration, III. 35.
- Sound, whence, III. 190. The Necessity and Uses of it, II. 611. Its Velocity, II. 571, 611. The Improvements thereof, II. 610.
- in Air rarified and condensed, *Id. ibid.*
- on the Tops of high Mountains, *Id. ibid.*
- The Distance to which it may be sent, II. 611. Its Power and Influence, II. 612.
- Space, Infinite, II. 19.
- Speaking Trumpet, II. 610.
- Speeches of the Patriarchs, what Reference they bear to the Promise of Redemption, III. 618. Speech peculiar to Man, III. 72. A Proof of Revelation, I. 167. Plameticus's Experiment concerning it, I. 167.
- Spider's Eyes, II. 596, 698. Their textrine Art, II. 649, 707. Darting their Webs, II. 699. Their Poison, II. 649.
- SPINOSA, (see Substance) his Scheme of Atheism, III. 299. His Atheistical Principles borrowed from Des Cartes, II. 508. Intelligence, his Account of it, III. 329. His Notion of God, III. 345. His Account of Miracles, III. 357. — that they are no Proof of a Revelation, III. 358.
- Spirit, (see Matter) its Properties, II. 235. Its Essence as much known as that of Matter, *Id. ibid.* May be united to an organical Body, II. 236.
- Holy, (see Ghost) II. 147. His Influences, I. 433. Socrates's Pretences to them, I. 433.
- Evil, their Wonders not mere Delusions, II. 164.
- Animal. See Perception.
- Spring, Perpetual, the ill Consequences of it, I. 81.
- Squatina, II. 639.
- Squillæ Aquaticæ, II. 633, 700.
- Squillulæ, II. 700.
- Stalactites, II. 585.
- Stars, believ'd to be Intellectual Beings, I. 30. Why formed, I. 76. Their Inhabitants not to be conceived Human, I. 76.
- Fixt, II. 498.
- State, — I. of Nature — Hobbes's Notion of it, III. 310. All Things common in it, III. 430. This not a State of War, *Id. ibid.* A Distinction necessary of a pure and corrupted State, III. 439. What is the true Sense of it, *Id. ibid.* In a State of Nature what necessary to Man, III. 440. — to be inform'd of his Happiness, and the Means of attaining it, and of the Nature of God, as soon as He was made, *Id. ibid.* The Means of Knowledge in a pure State of Nature, *Id. ibid.* In such a State of pure Nature, no need of coercive Government, III. 451. — no Property, III. 450. In a State of Purity, a Revelation necessary concerning Food, III. 454. — concerning Marriage, III. 456. — concerning Languages, III. 459. A State of Perfection, III. 439.
- II. Future, not knowable by Reason, III. 480. Constantly believ'd, III. 31, 283. The Certainty of it, I. 318. Intimations of it before and under the Law, I. 700. Prov'd (1.) from the promiscuous Rewards and Punishments in this World, II. 111. III. 86, 269. (2.) From Virtue's being not self-sufficient to its own Happiness, II. 114. (3.) From Mens natural Desire of Immortality, II. 119. (4.) From a Conscience or Judgment of their own Actions, *Id. ibid.* (5.) From Man's being by Nature an accountable Creature, *Id. ibid.* (6.) The Heathens
- Apotheosis a Proof of a future State, III. 35. The Happiness or Misery of it expressed in general Terms, III. 274. Atheist cannot free his Mind from the Fears of it, III. 284. — by any of his Schemes, III. 339.
- Statics, a catholic Rule in that Science, I. 34.
- Stoics, their *Vir sapiens*, I. 7, 12. Their last Refuge, I. 8. Ill qualified for the Christian Faith, why, I. 12. Their Opinion of the Beginning of human Race, I. 13. — Tenets, I. 19. Their Arguments for a Deity in Tully, II. 561, 575, 581, 599, 602, 607, 613, 615, 621, 624, 628, 629, 637, 638, 643, 651, 659, 666, 671, 672.
- Stomach, II. 634. Its Mechanism, II. 635. Its Faculty of Digestion, *Id. ibid.* Its Strength and Size conformable to its proper Food, *Id. ibid.* Sometimes one, sometimes more, *Id. ibid.* Of Quadrupeds different, II. 682.
- Animals found in it, II. 705.
- Storks, their Use, III. 192.
- Strata, various, their Uses, II. 585. Lie according to the Laws of Gravity, II. 586.
- Substance, the Notion of it, what, III. 413. Spinoza's Definition of it, III. 295. — his Opinion of one uniform only Substance, confuted, II. 13, 22.
- Immaterial, the Atheists Objections against it, I. 388. refuted, I. 390. The Idea of it as clear as that of Body, I. 391. The Notion of it believ'd by the Ancients, I. 392.
- Succession, infinite, impossible, I. 27.
- Suckling, II. 639, 656.
- Summer, if cold, why wet, II. 568.
- Sun, II. 498. Why a lucid Body, I. 77. Its Influence upon the Earth, I. 79. Its Distance from the Earth, II. 571. Its Motion round its own Axis, II. 573. Standing still, *Id. ibid.* II. 578.
- Superstition, an Averfion to it one Cause of Infidelity, III. 289. Most Atheists where Superstition abounds, *Id. ibid.*
- Swallows, II. 689, 693.
- Swans, II. 690, 692.
- Swearing not absolutely forbidden by Jesus, I. 126.
- Swifts, II. 689.
- Swine, II. 638, 640, 656, 680, 682.
- Symbols. See Fable.
- Synagogues, their Number in Jerusalem, II. 727.
- T.
- T. Tabernacle and its Parts, of what a Type, III. 771.
- Tabon, II. 694.
- Tarandus, II. 651.
- Tarantula's Bite, II. 612.
- Taste, its Nerves, II. 614. Its Consent with Smell, II. 614.
- Taught. Who may be said to be taught of God, I. 433, &c. and how taught of Him, I. 434. The Necessity of being taught and instructed in Matters of Religion, II. 122.
- TAYLOR, Bp. how abus'd by the Freethinkers, II. 783.
- Teachers, the Necessity and Use of them, II. 124. The best Heathen Teachers of Morality could not reform the World II. 125. — (1.) Because they were few, II. 126. (2.) and ignorant of some necessary Doctrines, II. 127. viz. How God was to be worshipped, II. 128. In what Method God was to be reconcil'd to Sinners, II. 129. and of some other Doctrines, *Id. ib.* (3.) What they did know, they were not able to explain clearly, II. 131. (4.) and those Things which they could clearly prove, they had not sufficient Authority to enforce, II. 132.
- Teaching of God, what meant by it, I. 431. Several Methods of it, (1.) by the Works of Creation and Providence, I. 431. (2.) By the Dictates of Mens Minds, I. 432. (3.) By extraordinary Persons raised up, and qualified by Providence, I. 431. (4.) By the Influences of his holy Spirit on Mens Minds, I. 433. The Design of it, I. 435.
- Two Ways of it; by Faith (or Authority) and Reason, III. 367. — that by Faith preferable, III. 369. — on account of its Certainty, *Id. ibid.* — Shortness, III. 372. — easiness, III. 373.
- Tears, II. 603. — whence, and their Use, II. 675.
- Teeth, II. 634. The temporary Defect of them, *Id. ibid.*
- Telescopes, the Invention of them, II. 664. Long ones, II. 536.
- Temper, Sedate, requisite to the Proficiency in any sort of Learning, I. 435.
- Temperance, a general Rule of it, III. 448.
- Temple, how the Glory of the first was to be supplied in the second, III. 701. Not figuratively to be understood of the Christian Church, III. 701. but literally of the Fabrick then erecting, III. 701. Two Objections to this answer'd, III. 702. The second Temple, how reckon'd the same from one Captivity to the other, III. 703. This Glory did not lie in the Magnificence of the Building, nor in its Duration,

ration, III. 704. This Glory must be greater than the ancient Shechinah, and most likely the Messiah, III. 705.

TERESA, I. 244.

Testament, Old, the present Order of it not the original one, II. 283. We ought to attend to it, as an important Confirmation of the New, III. 782.

— *New*, (see *Covenant*) the Books of it written by the reputed Authors, I. 552. II. 749. (Objections to this answer'd, I. 556.) Less Reason to doubt of this, than of the Authors of any other Book, II. 752. The not knowing the Authors of them, no Objection to their Authority, II. 753. The Books of it of divine Authority, II. 748. Objections against this answer'd, II. 183, 754. The Harmony of them, II. 750. Its History, II. 154, &c. A true Relation of Matters of Fact, II. 154. Its Canon settled, II. 756. The Harmony of the Old and New Testament, II. 516.

Testimony (see *Fathers*) the advantageous Difference of divine above human Testimony, III. 129. Testimony one of the Ways of assuring us of Matters of Fact, III. 130.

THALES. See *Water*.

Theft, why Lycurgus allow'd of it, III. 354.

Theology, Pagan, III. 310.

THEUDAS the Impostor, I. 97.

Things, (see *Difference*) a Difference between Things, II. 215. An unequal Distribution of Things in this Life, III. 268.

Thistles, their Use in making Glafs, II. 714.

Thornback, II. 636.

Thought. See *Intelligence*.

Thunder, the Cause of it, III. 192. Its Use, *Id. ibid.*

TILLOTSON, Archbp. how abus'd by Freethinkers, II. 785.

Time, the Jewish Method of expressing it, I. 136. Our Notion of it, I. 286.

Titmouse, long-tail'd, II. 647.

TOLAND, his Notion of Matter refuted, III. 316. See *Matter*.

Tongue, II. 617, 671.

Tongues, the Gift of them consider'd, I. 583.

Tortoise, II. 620. His Covering, II. 645. — Shell, II. 650.

— Land Tortoise, II. 640, 683.

Tradition, (see *Oral Law*) The Proof of a God from Tradition, III. 42. Not the Cause of the general Consent in the Belief of a God, II. 466. Of no Authority in Religion, unless deriv'd from Revelation, III. 605.

— *Christian*, as unexceptionable as the Jewish, I. 100.

— more so, I. 661. The Jewish Reasons of the unexceptionableness of their Tradition, answer'd, I. 658.

Transgression (See *Parents*, First) An Account of Man's first Transgression, II. 532. The Justice and Mercy of God reconcil'd in this Affair, II. 533.

Transmigration of Souls, why invented, III. 600.

Treadles, II. 694.

Tree of Knowledge, the Reasonableness of the Prohibition of it, III. 253. This Prohibition the Occasion of the Sin of our first Parents, III. 254.

Trees, their various Constitutions and Uses, II. 714.

Trinity, the Doctrine of it credible, I. 600. The Reasonableness of believing the Trinity, I. 760. The Doctrine of it deliver'd in the New Testament, I. 761. agreeable to the Scriptures of the Old, I. 769. Not repugnant to Natural Reason, I. 773. There is a Distinction between Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, I. 761. The same Attributes are ascrib'd to each of them, I. 762. and yet but one God, I. 764. Scripture concerning the Trinity to be taken in its natural and obvious Signification, I. 766. Consider'd under any human Explication, not fundamental, II. 775.

Truth, God's, (see *Veracity*) prov'd from his Holiness, III. 417. That He will not act contrary to the Nature and Relations of Things, III. 432. Will not make use of extraordinary, when ordinary Means will do, III. 432.

God's Moral Truth, and the Consequences of it, III. 433.

He cannot lie, II. 553.

Truth, the Notion of it, III. 425. The Obligations Men are under to write or speak the Truth, — Honour, I. 576. and Conscience, I. 577. Truth the Ground of Assent, I. 744. Sincerity recommended in the Search of it, III. 20. The Love of Truth necessary for Freethinking, II. 734. Reasons to induce Men to the Love of Truth, II. 735.

Truths of different Consequences, II. 781. Many Truths reveal'd in Scripture of great Importance to our Happiness, which could not be known by the Light of Nature, II. 503.

Truths, Moral, how knowable, I. 310.

Tuba Eustachiana, II. 607.

Tunica Aranea, II. 600. — Choroides, II. 601. and Sclerotica, II. 601.

Tunics of the Eye, why lined with black, II. 598.

Twilight, the Cause of it, II. 565.

Types, III. 546, 651. The Probability of them, III. 547.

The Use of Types and Allegories, II. 179. Types and Prototypes, &c. how different, I. 684.

Types of Christ, I. 148. III. 650. Israel, I. 149. and Solomon, III. 633, 664. The Tabernacle a Type of Christ's Incarnation, III. 771.

V.

Vacuum (A) prov'd, I. 65. II. 13. None according to Spinoza, III. 300. — confuted, III. 301. The Sum of it in our System, and its Proportion to corporeal Substance, I. 65.

VANINUS, his Proof of Atheism, III. 351.

Vanity, a Cause of Infidelity, III. 288.

Vapours, what, and how rais'd, II. 568, 579. III. 189. How precipitated, II. 568. Quantity rais'd, II. 573. — Use, II. 642.

Variety of Things for the World's Use, II. 581, 629, 714, 719. — of Mens Faces, III. 63. — Voices and Handwriting, II. 676.

Vegetables, their Variety and Uses, II. 714, 719. The Anatomy of their Bodies, II. 714. Their Respiration, II. 714. Their Transmutation, II. 715. Their Leaves, II. 715. Their Flowers, II. 715. Their Seed (its Generation and Make, II. 715.) contains in it a complete Plant, II. 715. Preservation and Safety of it, II. 716. Various Ways of Nature's sowing it, II. 717. Their various Methods of growing and standing, II. 718. Their Accretion, III. 199. To what they owe their Growth, II. 584.

Vegetative Life, III. 238.

Ventriloquous Persons, II. 617.

Veracity, God's, a necessary Attribute, III. 124. See *Truth*, God's.

Vespa Ichneumones, II. 646.

Vice, prejudicial to Man's temporal Interest, I. 9. Epidemical, I. 9.

Indisposes Men to receive Religion, I. 437.

Viper, its Covering, II. 645. The Texture of its Poison, II. 711. Its Use in Physic, II. 711. Cure for its Bite, II. 582.

Virginity, the Jewish Law concerning it accounted for, III. 549.

Virtue, (see *Moral Obligations*) what meant by it, III. 242. — by the Heathen Moralists, III. 246. No Difference between it and Vice, according to Hobbes, III. 349. This Opinion refuted, III. 350. Virtue productive of Happiness, I. 420. Virtue and good Manners absolutely necessary, II. 5. Virtue not Self-sufficient, II. 99. The Stoical Opinion of the Self-sufficiency of Virtue to its own Happiness, II. 114. The Practice of Virtue or Vice, must be attended with Rewards and Punishments, II. 110. Prov'd — from the Attributes of God, II. 110. — from the Necessity of some Vindication of the Honour of God's Laws and Government, II. 110. According to the Original Constitution of Things, Virtue and Vice are attended with natural Rewards and Punishments, II. 112. but now this natural Order of Things is perverted, II. 112. — therefore there must be a future State of Rewards and Punishments, II. 113.

Virtue, Moral. See *Honour*.

Vision, a way of Revelation, I. 220. How produc'd, III. 202. With two Eyes, why not double, II. 598. Why erect, II. 604.

Unbelief, the Justice of punishing Men for it, II. 408.

Understanding, what, I. 283. III. 414. Atheistical Accounts of it, II. 237. Its Powers, III. 238. Distinguish'd into Knowledge and Wisdom, III. 414.

Union of the divine and human Nature, III. 308.

Unions, II. 612.

Unity of God secur'd in the Christian Scheme, and not inconsistent with the Trinity, I. 468. God but One, III. 409. One supreme God, an Article of Christian Faith, II. 146.

Voice, II. 690. A way of Revelation, I. 223. Its Formation, II. 617. Variety of Mens Voices, II. 676. — the Necessity of this, III. 424.

Vortex, Etherial, refuted, I. 69.

Urim, II. 524.

Vulcano's, their Use, II. 587. III. 187, 191, 192. What owing to, III. 187.

Vulgar, (the) Persons distinguish'd from them, I. 432.

W.

Washing of Hands before Meat, why excepted against by our Saviour, I. 489.

Wasps, II. 633, 648, 656, 702, 707. Their Sting, II. 650. — *Ichneumon*, II. 646, 699, 702, 706, 707. Their Nidification, II. 656.

Water, an admirable Work of God, II. 712. Of infinite Use to the World, II. 712. Proper to be drank, III. 454. — Its Inhabitants, II. 712. The Number of their Kinds, II. 712. The vast Bulk of some, II. 712. The prodigious Minuteness of others, II. 712. The incomparable Structure of their Bodies, II. 713. Their Supplies of Food,

- Food, II. 713. Their Respiration, II. 713. Their Vision, II. 713. Their Poise and Motion, II. 713.
 — *Water Fowls* Legs and Feet, II. 689.
 — *Water* the Material Principle of all Things, this Doctrine not the Invention of Thales, III. 54.
 Forcible Eruptions of Waters, II. 586, 590. Waters of the Ocean prove the Wisdom of God, I. 83.
Water-witch of Jamaica, II. 720.
Weather, heavy and dark, II. 568.
Weeks, Seven, II. 174. Seventy (see *Prophecy*) Weeks of Years, II. 184.
Wells, how dug in Austria, &c. II. 590. A deep one, II. 610.
Whales, II. 712.
Wheat, II. 629.
Whispering-Places, II. 607.
Wickedness, the Cause of Atheism, I. 356.
Wild Pine, II. 720.
Will (the) what, I. 283. III. 415, 416. Not necessarily connected with Matter and Motion, I. 297, 300. Its Freedom consider'd, I. 427. That Man is endued with it, prov'd — from the Experience of all Mankind, I. 431*. — from the monstrous Absurdities of the contrary Opinion, I. 432*. The Perfections of it, III. 415. Will and Freedom the same, III. 416. Its Wisdom, III. 417.
Windpipe in divers Animals, II. 617.
Winds (see *Heat*) their Causes, I. 81. III. 190, 192. Their Usefulness, II. 566. Observations on them, II. 567.
Winds, (Trade) II. 566, 576.
Wisdom not the Result of Matter and Motion, III. 80. Speculative and Practical, III. 414. Practical, what, III. 417. Wisdom in Man, III. 73. — the Gift of God, II. 661. — of God, (see *Earth*, *Sex*, *Waters*, *World*) what, III. 411. God perfect in Knowledge and Wisdom, III. 415. God cannot act or will any thing contrary to it, III. 417. Why not so visible in the Government of the Moral, as in the Fabrick of the natural World, II. 115. Objections against it in the Creation of the World, answer'd, II. 245.
Witches, a Proof of a God, II. 218. Whether there be any, II. 217.
Wives, a Plurality of them forbidden — an Impediment to the Conversion of the East-Indians to Christianity, I. 9.
Wolves, II. 638, 640, 651.
Woman, the Promise of her Seed explain'd, III. 515.
Wonders of Demons, why wrought, I. 8.
Wood, (Rotten) its Use, II. 714.
Woodcocks, II. 633, 637.
Woodpeckers, II. 633, 636, 689. Their Tongue, II. 690.
World. See *Creation*, *Existence*.
 What meant by it, III. 410. Visible and Invisible, II. 576. — Its *Origin* as it is in *Genesis*, true, I. 190. The Creation of it, II. 147. A general Tradition that the World was made by God, III. 53. The Original of the World, I. 302. Not made by Matter and Motion, I. 297. Not produc'd from dead Matter by way of Forms and Qualities, II. 228. nor by a Plastic Nature, II. 229. Not the Effect of Chance, I. 64, 302. II. 226, 677. nor from a casual Hit of Atoms, II. 507. — absurd, II. 226. — impossible, II. 226. — not from Necessity, I. 303. but by the divine Influence, I. 66. — from Wisdom, I. 304. Not made by the mere Will of God without Reason, III. 421. How made, *Id. ib.* The Manner how it was produc'd, III. 54. The Novelty of it shewn, III. 421. Questions resolv'd with regard to its Creation — Why not created from Eternity, I. 59. Why created so late as it was, I. 59. Why not made Immenfe, I. 59. Why not created more ample, I. 60. — Its *Eternity*. — The Opinion of the Philosophers concerning the Eternity of it, II. 15. Its Beginning assert'd by Aristotle, II. 628. Not Self-existent, III. 410. Not from Eternity, II. 507. Impossible for it to be Eternal, without the eternal Existence of God, I. 298. — Its *Form* and *Frame*. — Tho' Matter were Eternal, we could give no Account of its Frame, without the Supposal of God, II. 225. The Form of it not necessary, II. 12. — nor its Motion, II. 12. — nor its Matter, II. 13. Not Eternal, I. 58, 86. II. 230. but created, II. 230. The Frame of it the most popular and plausible Proof of the Being of God, I. 53; II. 209, 498. III. 60. The harmonious Correspondence of its Parts a Proof of the Wisdom of God, III. 64. The Effect of God's Power, III. 421. The Consequences from the Creation of the World, consider'd as the Effect of God's Power, III. 421. Atheists Account of the Formation of it, II. 472. III. 342. More unreasonable than the Alchymist's Account of the Philosopher's Stone, III. 342. The Folly of it proved, — First, By showing that the Frame of the World cannot have its Existence from Necessity, III. 343. — This prov'd, (1.) Because no compound Being, such as the World is, can have necessary Existence, III. 344. (2.) Because there are evident Marks of a free and arbitrary Disposal in its Constitution, such as is consistent with good Sense, III. 344. Secondly, From the many Signatures of Wisdom in those Parts of it with which we are best acquainted, and therefore it must have been the Effect of some Wise and Intelligent Being, III. 346. Instances of this — 1st, The Annual Motion of the Earth, III. 346. 2dly, The natural Oeconomy of the World, III. 347. The Epicurean Objections against the World arise from Ignorance, III. 164. Modern Objections arise from the same Cause, III. 165. The Difficulty of judging of the Goodness of the System of the World, III. 168. The true Method of judging of it, III. 169. The Difficulty in this, no Reason against an Enquiry into the Nature of it, III. 170. The true Method of such Enquiry, III. 171. The Difference between this Method, and that of the ancient Philosophers, III. 172. The Phenomena — of the material World, in general, accounted for, III. 174. — and of the Planetary System, *Id. ibid.* — of the Earth's Motions, III. 174; and of the Planets Motions, III. 175. The whole System consider'd by the same Rules, III. 176. All the Evils that arise from hence are only natural Imperfections, III. 179. Whence the Irregularities of any Part of this System proceed, III. 180. These the Effects of some particular Laws of Motion, *Id. ib.* and are no Reflection on the Good of the Whole, III. 181. Nothing in it made in vain, III. 424. All Things must be for the best in all Respects, III. 432. That it is made for our Use, not absurd to suppose, I. 75. More Worlds than this, probable, III. 421. The Jewish Distinction between this World and that to come, III. 735. A World to come, credible, II. 559.
World, (Moral) the Ignorance of the Generality of Mankind, with regard to the present Constitution of it, III. 217. The Difficulty of this Subject, III. 218. Objections of the Heathen Moralists against the present Constitution and Government of the Moral World, III. 221. The Weakness of the Epicurean Arguments against it, III. 222. and of the Academics, *Id. ib.* and of the Moderns, III. 223. The Defects and Irregularities in the Moral World, not inconsistent with our natural Notions of God, III. 224. The Weakness of those Arguments drawn from Scripture, III. 226. — *God's Government of the World*. — Rules to form our Notions of this, taken from the divine Perfections, III. 431. The Consequences — from God's Knowledge and Wisdom, III. 432. — from his Truth, *Id. ib.* — from his Goodness, III. 433. — from his Holiness, III. 434. and from his Freedom, III. 438.
World, (after the Deluge) the necessary Methods of Providence to it, III. 525.
World, (Heathen.) See *Heathen*.
Worm, (Cadew) II. 707. Silk-Worm, II. 707.
Worms in the Flesh, II. 704. — in the Brain, II. 705. — in the Guts, *Id. ib.* and in other Parts, *Id. ib.* — in Deer, *Id. ib.*
Worship, Religious, the general Practice of all Nations, III. 34. — Ceremonial, what, I. 674. — Ritual, does not include Spiritual, I. 675. — Spiritual, what, I. 674. More acceptable to God than Ceremonial, I. 674. — Christian, thro' the Mediation of Jesus Christ, III. 483. This a Proof of the Divinity of the Revelation concerning it, III. 484. The Worship of Christ no Objection to the Christian Scheme of Worship, III. 484. The Christian high Opinion of the two Sacraments, does not support the Jewish Notion of the Superiority of Ritual Worship, I. 677.
Wry-neck, II. 636, 645, 651.
 Y.
YOUNG, in a certain Number, II. 624, 655. Young taken Care of, II. 638, 655, 709. Their Care of their Parent Animals, II. 638.
 Z.
ZENO, his Difficulties against the Possibility of Motion, solved, III. 323.
Zurchnitzer Sea, II. 587.
Zone, Torrid, why the ancient Philosophers thought it not habitable, I. 82. Its Inhabitants shorter liv'd, and inferior in Strength and Stature to other Nations nearer the Pole, I. 82.
ZOROASTER. See *Principle*.

